

Interview of

Mrs. Ida Virginia Reed

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R: Mrs. Reed
I: Interviewer

My father was John Wesley Perry, My mother was Jane Henrietta Orenbaun. They lived in Leon County Texas for a while and then they moved to Panola County Texas the first year the war broke out. Pa bought 120 acres. He cut down pine trees and built a house as big as he could build out of the trees. Pa had to go to war. All of his people lived up there close to Carthage. His father and mother and sisters and all lived up there. Down where they were living, there was none of their people there so he moved her up there--bought 110 acres of land--cut some of the timber down and built a log house and brought some of the land into cultivation and he went to war. He was gone to war when Brother Joe was a baby in arm.

He went to war and this lady, Aunt Mollie, had nobody to live with her and she lived with Ma. Ma taken her in and they lived there together during the war. They had some of the awfulest times that ever was. Somebody or other managed to kill a beef and they managed to get some of the beef and they jerked it. Of course, there's lots of people this day and time don't know what jerking beef means. It means putting it on a scaffold and a fire under it and keep turning it first one side and then the other until it's seared solid all over. You can put it anywhere you want to. You cut into a piece of that meat and it is the prettiest red meat that you ever seen--oh, it's tender and good. They were living there together. They brought the axe in every night and Aunt Mollie would spin her roll while Ma was carding hers--back and forth, back and forth. Well, they was working away just as hard as they could work and the door had a latch on the outside of the door and at night they had a scantlan to put across the door there so that the door opened on the inside; so that no one could get in. Well, they were working away and the door...the smokehouse door would open and shut, open and shut, open and shut,,well, Aunt Mollie got scared so bad she just, well, she was just having a fit nearly and she said, "Jane, you get that axe and stand there by that door and whenever they stick their head in that door, you chop it off and she says, I'll throw my chair of rolls in the fire if they come down the chimney." So after the dog got all the meat out--clear out, too--he comes back to the smokehouse and sets up a howl. Well, that was the booger, so they got through that night and all.

I: What was your father's father's name?

R: Well, now, sir, you've asked me a question that I don't know. He died long before I was born and I never did hear.

I: Do you know what his wife's name was? Your grandmother?

R: Yes, she was Moriah...what now...they called her Moriah, I know and she was a great big fat...one of these squabby women...she wasn't solid, she was fat. Moriah, let's see, I ought to know what her double name was.

I: What was your mother's maiden name?

R: She was an Orenbaun. The Orenbauns come from Tennessee. No, wait...

I: Virginia?

R: Yes, they come from close to Natural Bridge. There was a rock went across a ravine or river or something or other and it was used for a bridge and they called it Natural Bridge. Well, they was raised there close to that Natural Bridge (Rockbridge County). But now they come to Texas by water some way or another. I don't know how. There was some fellow after they got down in the South come ashore and he had a boll of cotton-- the first that they'd ever seen. He brought it aboard and they all taken it and they put it up here and said "Ain't that a pretty flower?" You know, ornament and everything like that. Pa wasn't on that ship. I don't know how he got here.

I: Can you tell me the names of your aunts and uncles that you can remember?

R: Well, there's Aunt Tilda Henry, Aunt Sis Forsythe and Aunt Babe--that was Pa's sisters and more of them... there's another one that I can't remember right now, Uncle Ab Perry, Uncle William Perry, Uncle Ed Henry-- there's a Joe Forsythe in there. He married one of Pa's sisters. Seems to me that I haven't got all the girls in there yet, but I can't think to save my neck. Let me call off again--Uncle William, Uncle Ab--now there's several of them--Uncle Jim...

I: What was your Daddy's full name?

R: John Wesley Perry.

- I: Where did he come from?
- R: He come from Kentucky, I believe it was...Let's see, Alabama, that's it.
- I: What was your mother's full name?
- R: Jane Henrietta Crabbe Orenbaun and she come from Virginia.
- I: How many brothers and sisters did you have?
- R: I didn't have no sisters at all, Mike, Bill and Joe-- there was three boys and myself was Pa and Ma's family.
- I: And your name is Ida Virginia?
- R: Yes, Ida Virginia, Pa's name was John Wesley Perry and Ma's was Jane Henrietta Crabbe Orenbaun--that was her name.
- I: Tell us about your girlhood and things you can remember when you were growing up.
- R: Oh, my goodness gracious,
- I: Now where exactly were you born? Were you born on the old place over there in Panola County Texas?
- R: Yes, sir, right might nigh where the well (gas) is-- just like to have got on the place where I was born, I was born in Panola County, Pa come home--the war broke up in '66, I was born in '66. The war broke up in '65, I guess, Pa come home, Joe was a baby when he went to war and as I said Ma and Aunt Mollie lived in that house there together--just a big log house and there was a bedroom in each end and a trundle bed under each bed. We cooked and we ate and we slept and everything we had to do in that one log cabin. The spring that's there now is the spring that we used water out of. We had to pack the water from the spring and they had a dog and the yard was fenced in to keep the boogers out and everything of the kind. They got a kind of fierce dog and had a block on him and he couldn't get out of the yard cause he couldn't jump the fence with that block to his neck. We wouldn't let him out when we'd go down to the spring, to be sure. One day Ma went to the spring and when she come back he wouldn't let her in. Some of them that was on the inside had to go out there and get ahold of the dog till Ma could get in. He sure was a good watchdog, He wouldn't let nothing past him.

- I: Where did you go to school?
- R: I went to school in Coryell County. I left Panola before I started to school.
- I: When did you leave Panola County?
- R: I don't know just when it was.
- I: You were about seven years old?
- R: Yes, just about seven years old. It was swampy and there was cane brakes there and them cane brakes was in a kind of a little lake of water and the water would turn right green and they'd have to go and drain that out into the Sabine River. There was coal in the bottom of the river--solid coal. Mike was a great big boy and he dug some of it and carried it home with him and put it in the fireplace. It just burned like everything. We lived in a mile and a half of the Sabine River and we was sick all the time, Pa was well fixed there,,he had a good plank house besides that log house he had there. He had a shelter for everything that he had. A plow nor nothing didn't lay out and take the weather. He'd cut the timber down and take it to the mill. There was a saw mill there not very far away and he'd have it sawed up. He had a place as big as this house--oh, bigger--as big as this whole lot covered over solid and all of his wagons, tools and everything was put in there to keep them out of the weather. Then he had, well, he just had all sorts and all kinds of sickness and all. That's the reason Pa left there. He said he seen he was gonna lose Ma if he didn't leave there. There would be days when every one of us would be in bed except Pa with chills and fever and we had to get out of there.
- I: How did you go to Coryell County? In a covered wagon?
- R: Yes, covered wagon. They bought the cloth--the material--and made a tent. Pa and Ma made the tent and we had that tent of a night when we'd stop. They made a hip tent--one width of cloth went all around this way and then the others went over up high. We had poles, you know, had a big pole down there and one up here and we'd stretch this right tight and bring it right up here and stretch this right tight with pegs in the ground. We had a good tent.
- I: It was after you got down to Coryell that you liyed in the tent?

- R: Yes, that was when we was traveling going from Panola to Coryell County.
- I: In those days when you were traveling in a covered wagon, did you have a road to travel on?
- R: Yes, sir, two trails just like the wagon wheels make, that was all.
- I: That's all there was? What did you do?
- R: The timber was just as thick as it could be. Oh, there would be little gladey places along where you could stretch your tent--things like that.
- I: You had oxens hitched to the wagons, didn't you? How many did you have?
- R: Yes, sir, had four oxens--two teams. No, wait a minute, he had four oxen for that team. When we were moving from Panola up to Coryell and he had everything we had in the other wagon and Mike had four horses to that. Everything we had was in there, Mike rode one of the horses and drove them and we was ahead in the ox wagon, me and Ma and the boys.
- I: What all livestock did you take with you?
- R: The teams. We had four teams and an odd horse--the colt wasn't much more than grown. His name was Selem and Mike claimed Selem. When we got to the Cowhouse Mountains, Aunt Mollie and Uncle Bob... Aunt Mollie was the woman that lived in with Ma during the war... they was up there on the Cowhouse Mountains. Well, Pa was leaving there. I believe we was bound for Hill County and so Ma hadn't heard of Uncle Tom's folks in years and Uncle Tom didn't know where she was at. By accident, they found out where he was and they went up there. When she went up there, we were in Coryell. When she got back home, she told Pa "Now you get on a horse and go right back up to Toms and rent a place. That's the prettiest country, the best farming country that there is anywhere." So that's where we landed in Coryell County... landed there and stayed there. I don't know how long; I know I walked three miles to school, I know that much. One day there was a family... we was the furtherest away and Aunt Millie had a little girl. There was no school up there where she was and she sent her down to our house to go to school down there with me. Well, me and Annie, Ma would get us off early. The next house

was Uncle Ed's house. They'd wait there, Them children would wait for us and the next house was the Porter house and they had a bunch of kids there and they'd wait for us. Well, I don't know how come me and Annie were late, but some way or another they went off and left me and Annie one morning. We started off to school just like two heros and on ahead of us a little piece we noticed a bunch of cattle and there was two old bulls in there and you never seen as much bellering and seen as much fighting in your life. Well, me and Annie struck out for a fence--there was a fence way across over there--we struck out for that fence running just as hard as we could go. We got there but them bulls seen us before we got there. They broke up the fight and started after us. We clumb...it was a rail fence...we clumb the fence and got away out in the field before they got there. Well, we went on in the field till we come to this house. The man who worked the place and we got out on the open, got shut of the cattle and went on to school. It was recess when we got to school. Now we were that long a getting there, but we got there all right enough. But they all went off and left us that morning--they treated us bad.

I: Was this in Coryell County?

R: Yes, it was in Coryell County.

I: You were telling one time about when you got to Coryell County somebody told you about the Indians and burned the grass and everything off.

R: Yes, when they got there, Pa wasn't satisfied, He'd rented this farm on the shares, He didn't have any farming tools with him--didn't move any of them, you know. The man furnished everything, you know, and share the crop with him. There was a bunch of us and we all walked to school there and we had to walk three miles. If it was real pretty weather, there was a narrow cut, We could cut off a mile. It wasn't often though we could do that. Me and Annie clumb the fence, We got to the fence before the bulls did. We went in the field to this house. When we got to the house, we got out on the road. It was recess when we got there. He didn't give us a whipping but we sure expected something or other to hapen.

I: Before we get on to Coryell story, tell us what your mother and father did back there in Panola County, What was their trade?

R: Well, Pa's trade was a farmer, Ma was a tailor and she went far and near. People would die and one night, I guess Mike was about two years old, and he was the oldest child, and they sent for Ma to come. It was five miles to where she had to go. There was a creek there called Tom's Creek, a little prairie and she had to go across that. It was just getting dusk when the call come. They had a little pony they called Texas and Pa saddled Texas up and he told her when she started, "Now you go in a long gallop." There was panthers and everything of the kind there, so he taken Mike and went up to Aunt Tilda's. Aunt Tilda lived in the old house that's standing there now, built before the war, that old log house. She lit out. Had her bonnet tied on, you know, and she had to make one of these shrouds. They had nothing but cloth that was woven, you know, and it was so narrow they had to sew two widths together to put them in the coffin. They wouldn't bury them in them old homemade jean clothes. Put this in the coffin and put the corpse in there and cover the corpse. I don't know that they put it over his head at all. Whatever, that's the way that they fixed the dead, they just buried them in their underclothes with this winding sheet--they called it a winding sheet--over them. They put this in first, then put the corpse in.

I: What happened on this ride?

R: Well, it was five miles and there was one house. The old panthers and all and you could hear an old pig going up Tom's Creek squeeling, you know, a panther had him. Well, Pa told her, "Jane, now all you've got to do is stay in the saddle. That saddle will stay there and you go in a long gallop." She had five miles to go. Well, she lit out about dusk. She had her bonnet tied on tight and there was heavy timber on both sides--just nothing but a wagon road. Well, she seen two old panthers laying within about ten feet of the road. Well, she knowed she had to pass them. She said she knew if her bonnet hadn't been tied on as tight as it was her hair would have pushed it off her head, but she went by. She said they raised up and looked at her and lay back down. So she got there all right enough. She stopped at this house and there was nobody at home and she had to go the rest of the way by herself, as the saying is, and she had already went that distance and she got there safe and sound. Pa told her "Now all you've got to do is stay in that saddle. If you stay in there, that saddle ain't gonna come off of there and it's not going to turn. Texas will take you there and you go in a long lope--don't poke along."

- I: She made men's clothes, didn't she?
- R: Yes, she made men's clothes, men's suits and fine shirts and everything.
- I: And your uncle made coffins too, didn't he?
- R: Yes. Uncle Jim...Uncle Ed, I got it wrong. Oh, sugar, anyhow, he handled everything--coffins and everything. He'd make them right there. That's the only way that they had to get the coffins for him to make them. I played in the shop many and many a day and watched him make them. I can tell you how to make a coffin just too slick to talk about. I played in there so many times with him.
- I: Coryell County now.
- R: Coryell County was wild, oh, my goodness. People come to Pa and Uncle Ed...Mike and Tom was just about grown young men. They said, "Don't you let these boys out at night. There's all kinds of burglar and everything of the kind going on." There was several men shot off their horses in the road, just riding along. So they stayed pretty close. All the way of going was ox wagon or horseback and this doctor went everywhere and his wife generally went with him. So they was riding along going to a sick patient and an old panther come running out of the brush and jumped up behind one of them and then off on the ground and then on the other one. He'd run ahead and played that way with them and every time he'd light on the horses' hips he'd leave great bashes in them and the doctor and his wife like to never got shut of him. But when he got tired playing, he ran off in the woods and that was the last of him. But the horses' hips was just cut all to pieces with their claws. They had a terrible time with those panthers. You know a horse ain't gonna stand still when it's being cut with an animal's claws.
- I: Who were the people you were talking about, one bunch killed the other one?
- R: Oh, that was Stull and Babb. There was an old grudge some way or other--don't know how it happened or anything of the kind. Anyhow, Babb, he was a wild man; he drank whiskey...had a child about two years old. He'd get drunk and get on a horse and take that child by the feet and hold it out that way and just go everywhere, just run that horse everywhere and him holding that child out by its feet. But Bill Babb and John Stull had a grudge,

Babb, he was rough and tough and didn't care who he hurt or anything of the kind, They started out and they was gonna kill hogs,

I: Who was?

R: Stull and his neighbor. He told his neighbor,,he had a boy about eighteen years old,,he says, "You and your wife and baby come on and go up to my house tonight and we'll get up early in the morning and kill the hogs." Well, they went and left the boy at home. Well, in the night the house caught afire on the outside,

I: Well, it was Babb who set it afire, wasn't it?

R: Yes, it was one of them. So Stull, they just rushed, you know, to get out of the house and he jumped out and they shot him down. This neighbor who'd come to stay all night to kill hogs the next morning, he come next and they shot him down with his baby in his arms and they left them. They had a big flat rock at the door for a step and when they shot him down, they come and picked him up by the hair of his head and said, "Yes, this is the devil we want," and they'd just hold him up and drop him down on that rock--hold his head up and drop him down on that rock. Well, they finally left. The woman hid behind--she was following her husband but she had time,,she had a child by the hand... to jump behind the door and not jump out. Well, they had the two dead men laying out in the yard and it was, I don't know, two or three miles into Turnersville. She went out there after they was gone and straightened them out and spread something over them. She went down there to this man's house and told the boy what had happened and for him to get up and saddle his horse and go into Turnersville for help. Well, she went back to where the corpse was and she waited and waited for help to come. That boy got up and saddled his horse and go so bad scared he went back in the house and didn't go anywhere atall wherever. She walked into Turnersville and passed them on the road. They was out in the bushes talking about it and all, about getting the damn rascal that they wanted. That was him all right enough, but they just would hold him up by the hair on his head and let it drop on that rock and finished killing him that way.

I: What did they ever do about it?

R: Not a thing, didn't do a thing. They tried to and when they come after Pa and Mike, the sheriff did, to summon

them to meet at Tilton--that was the schoolhouse-- and they would go and take them in. Well, they got up and went. They stayed for the sheriff was to come there to meet them. Well, they stayed and they waited and they waited and the sheriff never did come. Daylight began to break and Pa taken Mike and went home. The rest of them went on and when they got there, he had his whole gang around him and his rifles stacked out in the front yard, a big pile of rifles stacked out there for them to use, you know. Well, he come out of it. They didn't do anything to him at all whatever. He come out of it all right. They killed them.

I: Did you ever find out what he killed him over?

R: No, never did. It was over a cattle deal years before. Some way or other they had a grudge against one another. I don't know just exactly what the grudge was. They had two yoke of oxen to one wagon and there was two of them that just wouldn't go on that bridge. They run them down and a man went across on the other side and caught them. The rest of them went across on the bridge.

I: Now that was when you was going from Panola to Coryell County?

R: Yes, we got along very well from there on.

I: How long did you stay in Coryell County?

R: Oh, we stayed there, let's see now, Pa rented a place the first year we were there. He made a crop on the shares. He had no farming utensils and made a crop on the shares. The next year he made a crop for himself and he got the utensils and everything on the halves.

I: What year was that? Do you remember?

R: No, I don't remember. I know I was about seven.

I: Where was it that so many of the family was living in the house? Was that Coryell? What happened there?

R: Yes. Well, Pa had the place rented and the people was to be out by the time we got there. There was already four families in that house and all of them had a family of children. Well, we had to sleep on the floor and the last ones to bed was the first ones to get up. They'd get up and they'd cook their breakfast and all. Then the next family would get up and the next ones until they all got their breakfast. We only had two

meals a day. There was a pet hog there and that pet hog was right under everybody's feet. Pa told the man that owned the hog, "Just as certain as that hog roots my wife down, he's a dead hog. I'll kill him right there." Five families stayed in that house. Now let's see now, there was Uncle Ed's family, our family was two, Porters was three. I don't remember the rest that was there, but we commenced in the side room, made a pallet down, got the side room filled, commenced into the main room building, the big room. The last ones that went to bed had to be the first ones to get up.

I: What did you have, one big room and a side room?

R: Yes, that's what we had; one big room and a side room, and a pet hog. Oh, that pet hog was a sight. And we also went up on the mountain to Aunt Mollie's, went up there visiting and she had a sheep...a goat, no, I'll get it right after while...it was a deer. They had the wheat out on a sheet drying it--it had got wet--drying it and that deer would run and jump in that wheat. A fellow picked up a rock and tossed it at it and hit him and broke it's leg. Well, then we had that lame animal to take care of and we all had the darndest mess you ever seen. You never seen anything like it. Uncle Ed's family taken the side room and Mary Jim,.. this is not very nice...Mary Jim had the diahrea and they had a half bushel and they carried that in there and when daylight come and when they could get out, Mary Jim had that half bushel full. No, he don't want that in his story, but I was just telling what happened then. We had...the men folks slept in the wagons, but there was five families of us now in there.

I: How long did you have to live like that?

R: Pa finally told one family "I'll let you have my tent if you'll move out in it," so they did. One family taken Pa's tent, borrowed it, and he never did see it anymore, of course. So we finally got it all down to two families. We didn't have a thing under the sun--we didn't have a bedstead. We had some chairs and our cooking utensils that we cooked on the fire with and Pa went to Waco and bought a bedstead and everything that went with it--got two bedsteads and we got our first furniture. He went to Waco from Turnersville in Coryell County and got our furniture.

I: Where did you go from Coryell County?

R: To Hill County.

- I: When was that?
- R: Well, now I was about eight years old somewhere along there.
- I: You were older than that, you were about seven before you left Panola County, wasn't you? You must have been in Coryell two or three years.
- R: Yes, Pa bought a place there. He bought a place and the first year he paid a thousand dollars down on it and a man come to him and says, "Mr. Perry, I see you gonna pay for that land, pay for that place right away, I'll tell you now there's a link out, says, the title is no good. There's a boy that's about a half idiot and won't sign nothing." Pa didn't buy the place. He bought another place. I don't know just how we did live there. I know I had to walk three miles to school, I know that much. I started to school there.
- I: When you left Coryell for Hill County, did you have your oxens and wagons then?
- R: No, we had horses then, by that time. I don't think we carried any oxen at all up to Hill County. Ma hadn't heard from Uncle Tom, she'd lost him, She didn't know where he was at and so Pa was a man...he'd come to town here and everybody that he seen or anything he'd talk to them and he'd made hisself, as the saying is, useful. Ma got on the track of Uncle Tom's folks there. Well, so Pa told Mike to get the wagon and put the sheet and bows on it and take us up to see Uncle Tom. She went up there and was so well pleased that when she got home, she says, "You get on a horse and go back up there and rent a farm."
- I: Well, now was that in Hill County?
- R: Hill County. So he did. That's how come us to get up there, just an accident of locating Uncle Tom.
- I: Well, now where was this place in Hill County with respect to Hillsboro? What direction from town was it and how far?
- R: Well, it wasn't so very far. I don't remember just exactly how far it was.
- I: Was it about two and a half miles north of town?

- R: Something or another like that and the grass, buffalo grass, you know what that is, grows way up like this, Pa sent Bill down in the field one day for something or another, I don't know what it was, but anyhow, sent him down in the back of the field. He seen the grass waving, here he come back the worst scared boy you ever seen. He says, "There's Indians down there, there's Indians down there. That grass is just full of them." The cows was just moseying around in that tall grass and he was the worst scared thing that ever was.
- I: When you were a teenage girl, didn't you chase a tramp around the house one time?
- R: Yes, I sure did. I chased him around the house. I was washing. We had to go on the other side of the railroad to wash because the well was down there, Mike and Kate lived right there at the well. Mike had come in for dinner and says, "Ida, come have dinner with us." My Dudley was a baby. I says, "No, I'll go on up to the house. Ma will have dinner ready," So when he come to the path that went to the house, he taken it. When he taken the path, I picked up a bucket of clothes and I followed him and when I got ot the woodpile, I picked up this long standard that they had when they hauled wood from the timbers,, they had to go twelve miles,,they burned firewood, He lit out to the house. Well, Ma was in there with the baby--my Dudley was a baby. I picked up one of them things and I went in the house. The safe door was opened--there was a raft of food in there. I said, "Ma, where is that tramp that come to the house?" She says, "Why, there ain't no tramp around here," I says, "Yes, there is. I seen him come in. I says, he come right straight in and went in the house." Well, I had that long standard in my hand and I'd run through the house here and he'd stick his head in the other back door. I'd run here to try to catch him and finally I just run him and run him and run him. Mike was standing in the door across the railroad at his house watching me. Finally, I just motioned him to come--didn't call him. I seen I couldn't do nothing with him. Ma kept telling me there wasn't,,, he wasn't there. She says, "There's nobody out there, What do you mean?" I says, "Yes, there is. There's a tramp out here." And Mike come and when he seen Mike come round, he come out in the open. He wanted something to eat. I says, "I've not got anything for you." He seen Mike a coming and Mike met him and says, "What you after around that house?" He says, "I wasn't

around that house." Mike says, "Yes, you was. Do you see that railroad? You get on it and don't be long getting outside of it." He says, "You're gonna get yourself in trouble and in serious trouble." No, sir, Ma wouldn't believe, and I said to her, "Now you see, there he is right there--he's been running and looking in one door while I was looking out the other."

I: Tell about the time the house caught afire.

R: Oh, the house caught afire. We always had a ladder setting up by the side room. We had a big room and a side room. Well, me and Ma started to the barn to get the cobs and I don't know what made me look back, but I looked back and the flames were running about that high all around the stove pipe that went up, you know, that went up from the stove. And the ladder was there and we started to the barn and I said, "Oh, Ma, the house is on fire." I run back and run to the kitchen and got a bucket of water and I clumb that ladder and run to the roof of the house and got a straddle of it and put that fire out and there was two men that went a riding by and never offered to help or do a blooming thing, but I put the fire out. I told Ma, "Don't you get up here. You stand there on the ladder and I'll turn the bucket loose and let it slide down and you can catch the bucket." But I got up there and I put the fire out--so they rode on and there I sat.

They hauled brick in from Port Fury to Hillsboro to build up houses. Charlie (Reed) happened to be ahauling the brick and Bill was ahauling the brick. Well, they was both very friendly and they'd taken up together and they helped one another load and unload the brick. That's the way I met Charlie. Bill brought him to the house with him and all and Uncle Ben and Aunt Mollie--that was his father and mother--they lived just a piece up the railroad from us there and we all got to be very friendly and very neighborly. Mother was one of these "whee whee women" -- she'd just go all to pieces at nothing. It was Pa and Bill, they went up to...they called them, Uncle Ben and Aunt Laura, they said they was going up to Uncle Ben's to talk awhile and they'd be back directly and it come up, oh, it come up a terrible, terrible rain. But while they was up there, Henry Eastland lived down across the field and Anna, that was his wife, had some kind...threw some kind of a fit and run out and screamed--just a screaming as loud as he could scream for help. Well, of course, Bill and Charlie and Uncle Ben, they all run to Henry's aid and in the

meantime, it had come up a storm cloud and just poured down rain till there was no use in talking. When Charlie got down there, he got on a horse and went to town after the doctor. We lived about one and a half or two miles from town, and it rained until they couldn't get home, that's all there was to it. Well, I never seen such a rain fall in all my life. The two little orphan boys, Pa's nephews, Ma got them up. Pa hadn't showed up, Bill hadn't showed up and they just knowed there was something wrong. Ma put them on some good heavy clothes and all. She says, "I want you to get on the railroad and stay on the other side of the track and see if Aunt Laura knows anything about where they're at." Well, when they got up there, Aunt Laura was just awalking the floor, just screaming and doing everything under the sun you could think of. She told them they were down at Eastons and it was raining so that they couldn't get home and they come back and Ma jerked them in the door just as the heavens opened up and you never seen such a rain in your life. But she got the children back home. They had to stay there all night.

I: How old were you when you got married?

R: Between eighteen and nineteen years old.

I: Where did you marry?

R: Married right there in Hillsboro, at Pa's home.

I: And who did you marry?

R: I married Charlie Reed. There was his family, his brother-in-law's family. Johnnie died before ever I met any of them--that was the oldest boy. They said there never was a finer man that ever lived than Johnnie Reed was. That's the way I met Charlie, through Bill. Him and Bill was just like two old pals. We married, just a quiet wedding there at home. His family and our family and that's all there was to it.

I: Where was his family from?

R: Tennessee.

I: They came from Tennessee?

R: Yes, they come from Tennessee. Mother was one of those whee whee women--"I just worked my arms off to here, I ain't got no arms from here down." Oh, she was a sight. Mother was a sight.

- I: When was your first child born?
- R: Let's see, Dudley was born the 5th of March, 1887 and Mamie was born two years later. There was two years difference in all my children's age. There was Dudley then Mamie, Frankie then Myrtle. Well, that's the way they come, then Johnnie--he passed away at eight months old. She had fever when she died. Frankie died when he was eighteen months old--he died with cholera morbis.
- I: Where was Frankie born?
- R: Frankie was born there in Hillsboro. Myrtle was born in Hillsboro, Johnnie was born in Collin County, Cleo was born in Hillsboro.
- I: Where was that? Where did you live?
- R: That was in Coryell. He was sleeping with Pa and he kept grabbing and scratching himself. Pa took him out and stripped him off to see what was the matter and he had crab lice. They'd bring herds by there, three and four thousand head at a time. There was a little grove of trees up there just a little piece from our house and they'd leave their old clothes there and Pa would go up there and he'd get them clothes on a stick and bring them down there and stick them in a wash pot--put water on them and bring them to a boil and save the clothes. They was good clothes and that's the way they got the lice.
- I: He made this fellow get rid of his lice before he'd let him stay?
- R: Yes, he had to get "shed" of his lice right now. Mike said he'd been noticing it; there was something wrong with him some way or another. Finally he told Pa and when he told Pa, Pa went to the bottom of it. There was just a brush fence around our yard, a high brush fence, and I stood there and watched. There was one herd--I forgot how many thousand head there was in it. It taken a half day nearly to go by. I never will forget that. I stood out there among them. There was a man on this side and a man on that side and they were going "whoop, whoop, whoop." Both men was and you know when you make the noise like that it keeps the cattle's nerves down and they wouldn't stampede.
- I: Didn't you use to get the wild cattle off the prairie, put them in pens and try to milk them?

- R: Yes, ma'am. I've seen them rope a cow, throw her down, tie her legs together and milk her laying flat on her back. There was one old cow, a brindle cow, and Pa wanted to milk that cow so bad he didn't know what to do. Fight--they'd fight a circle saw. Pa went out...one got after him. He stumped his toe and fell down. The cow kept a going. He got to the fence-- there was a big high rock fence all around the place-- a field I mean on that side, and he got up on the fence. Them cows would make a lunge after him on the fence. One old cow, they hobbled her. She was a good milker. Pa knowed she was a good milker and they hobbled her and turned her aloose. Well, I tell you right now she liked to have killed Pa, that's all there was to it. She hung her horns in the strap of his breeches and tore them loose and Pa got to this fence and there was a tree there where he could up on it. That old cow, she tried her biggest to get to him. If they could ever get the hobbles off of her, she could go. They finally got the hobbles off her, I don't know hardly how they done it.
- I: Well, did you ever get any milk from any of them?
- R: No. Never got a cow in the whole business. Never got any milk from any of them at all whatever. First milk we got, Pa bought two milk cows as quick as he got a place to live.
- I: Wasn't there wild horses there, too, as well as cows?
- R: Yes, there was wild horses, too.
- I: Did you catch and break your own horses?
- R: Yes, they would some of them. There was the prettiest bay with black mane and tail you ever seen. Their tails was dragging the ground nearly. Yes, there would be big herds of them all over the prairie. I don't know whatever become of them but they got "shed" of them some way or another.
- I: Did you ever see a buffalo?
- R: Not only in a pen. I seen a buffalo in a pen.
- I: Didn't Grandpa take a horseback trip? Start to West Texas and they told him the Indians...
- R: Yes, him and Mike. When he got there, he wasn't satisfied. He left us there and him and Mike got on a horse and a pack horse and started out to locate a place to live,

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Interview with LIDA VIRGINIA (PENNY) REED ~~REED~~ 1901 -- recorder was not functioning right -- not enough volume. A lot of interview was inaudible.

-----Don't know just where they were released, but anyhow ----

The wagons and all - they were four mule teams - when the ~~war~~ war was over with, my father told one of the children - now them teams and mules belongs to the government, but they are just as much ours as they are anybody else's -- I've walked for over three years and I'm not gonna walk home. And he got a man to go with him and they went to the corrals with their rifles with the bayonets on them and they told them they'd come after the team. They went in there, hitched up two mules to a wagon and drove it out. Went to camp and got all the sick and wounded that couldn't walk. There wasn't room for Pa to ride. He taken his old rifle and went back and got h him a horse - saddled it up and rode it out of there and he rode two or three days and he came to a brother-in-law of his sitting on the side of the road. He had walked until he couldn't walk any longer and they'd gone on and left him. Pa got down off of the horse and put Uncle Sam (Yarborough) up there and he walked home - after all his time trying to keep from walking home - he walked home.

Now I don't know. I won't say where they were released because I don't remember.

Q. Where was your home?

A. In Panola County (Texas). We lived in Panola County. We come to Panola County the first year that the war broke out. Pa bought 120 acres of land. He cut down the pine trees and built him a house as big as he could build out of the trees.

Q. Now that's the old home place close to Carthage?

A. Yes, that's the old home place close to Carthage. Now we lived there -- I was born the second year after the war. I was born in '66 and we lived there until my mother was mighty nigh dead with chills and fever. He had a bunch of cattle down on the Sabine River. He built a big house, sheds and everything for his stock, plow tools and everything else. He sold everything and lit out and went to West Texas. We had a four horse team -- two teams to one wagon and that had all of our goods in it -- all of our household goods and everything that we could carry.

Pa drove an ox team -- two yokes of oxen and he rode in that and throwed a camp at night. Pa would build a big fire at night out in front of the tent and Ma would do the cooking on that fire out in front of the tent. We'd git up the next morning and we'd go and come to a big river -- well, it was a big ~~ravine~~ ravine. It was nearly dry but there was an awful big bridge over it and one of the teams -- the lead team of the oxen wouldn't go on it. They had to take them loose -- my

oldest brother that was riding and driving the other team -- he got off his horse and walked the bridge and got on the other side. Pa taken the lead oxen loose from the wagon, run them down the bank and chunked them and made them go up the other bank and my brother caught them and then we went across the bridge, hooked the team up and went on.

One place we had to cross by ferry boat -- crossed one river on a ferry boat and the lead team-- one of the oxen sulled and laid down. They couldn't get him up. They worked just about an hour. Thinking about it -- it was an hour, and they finally got him up and we got across that river and we went on but I forget what river that was.

Q. This is the trip that you wound up in Coryell County?

A. No, in Bell County.

This Uncle Bob and Aunt Mollie who lived with my mother during the war -- they moved up there right on the foot of the Cowhouse (Cayhouse) (?) Mountain and we landed there a Christmas Eve evening and we stayed there and Pa --

Q. What year was that?

A. Well now, the date I couldn't tell you. I was about 7 or 8 years old.

Q. About '73 or '74?

A. Yes, somewhere along there and we stayed there and Pa rented a farm on the halves -- he couldn't afford to lose a crop, so he rented this farm. We had a stove. He cut down saplings and split them in two and nailed one to the wall here and come out here and then put a post out here and one coming out this way and made what they called standing jacks and that's what we slept on.

Q. A one legged bed?

A. Yes, a one legged bed - a standing jack. So when the crop was laid by, him and my oldest brother, they saddled up two horses and a pack horse and they lit out for West Texas, sure enough. They wasn't satisfied to stay there -- that was very pretty country. They got -- oh, I don't know -- about two or three days travel and they told them -- some one on the road stopped them and told them that they needn't go any farther -- the Indians had burned that whole county off and there wasn't a drop of water from a certain place on -- no grass nor nothing. So they turned then and went back and got into Coryell County. They rented a farm there and he hauled his grain and everything across. There was a log cabin there -- the kitchen stood -- oh, I guess about twenty feet away from the main building.

Q. Where in Coryell County?

A. In Coryell County? Let's see now -- we was close to Turnersville. So when we got there, Lo and Behold, there was already three families in the house. They had-

n't got out and there was two families of us. My father's sister and their family and Pa and his family. There was five families of us.

There was a side room and one sig room and as I said the kitchen sat way off. We'd commence back yonder in that side room and make a pallet down here and a pallet there until everyone was bedded down and there was a place for every one to sleep. The last ones that went to bed had to be the first ones to get up because they was sleeping next to the fire place. They'd get up and go to the kitchen and cook their areakfast and get out and then the next family would go and then the next family would go until we'd all get our breakfast and then they would commence and cook their dinner.

----- inaudible -----

We were out on Pecan Creek, one of the clearest creeks there is anywhere. There was deer there and other wold animals there.

Q. Now right here -- how many brothers and sisters did you have at this time?

A. I had three brothers and no sisters. I am the youngest child and I have kept the place where I was born in the family ever since. There's a well on it now -- down in Panola County, not very far -- not quite two miles from Tatum -- Nine and one-half miles from the Sabine River.

-----inaudible -----

My mother was a tailor and she made men's clothing. Whenever a person died, she was always sent for and made the shroud. My oldest brother was a baby in arms -- she got a call late one evening -----

-----no volume -----

Well, there was panthers, bears and everything else. Pa had a bay horse named Texas. That was in Panola before I was born -- So Pa went out and saddled Texas. girded the saddle on tight and my father told my mother "Don't spare the whip - that saddle is on there tight and you stay in the saddle and don't spare the whip."

Well, she was riding along in a long gallop. She had her bonnet tied on and there was two big panthers laying beside the road. ----- inaudible -----

Well, she said if she hadn't had her bonnet tied on tight, her hair would have pushed it off her head. She gave Texas the whip and away they went. She had to go five miles and there was one house between where she lived and where the corpse was. ----- a lot of interviewed inaudible -----

Well, in Coryell County we lived there in Coryell County and we always had a camp meeting -- two weeks camp meeting. Of course, my father always went -- my father and mother always went to camp a week. Well, we went out and camped.

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all around -- we didn't have a tent -- we just used the wagon.

 My mother's sister lived there about 300 yards from the tent -- camp ground. Well, we all went to church that night ----- to cut some wood.

Well, he never come back and we wondered wht he never come back ----- My father, for one, always -----

Went all around -- you could hear people hollering "Oh, John, Oh, John, where you at?"

Pa hollered back "Here I am" -- 'way down in the woods somewhere of nother. So Aunt Sue said "Well, there ain't a thing you can do but make the pallets down and you all stay all night. After whole you could hear the wagons ooming -- that was the end of that coming -- believe me it was exciting.

Q. I'd like for you to identify all these aunts and uncles that was traveling with you all this time.

A. Well, there was Uncle As, lived in Arkansas; Uncle William lived in Panola County; Uncle As lived there for a long time and so did Uncle Jim; Aunt Tidla, Aunt Betty, Aunt Base, Aunt Susan, my mother's sister. That made nine children -- five boys and three girls -- Uncle Tom, Aunt Sue, Uncle Jim, Uncle George. Ma had a sister that died when she was a young girl. There was three girls in that family. My mother and Aunt Sue -- Aunt Isabell died when she was a young girl, a you. lady.

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You couldn't buy ready made shoes in those days.

Q. How did they get what shoes that they had?

A. There was a shoemaker there -- a cobler, they called him -- he knowed how to do. He made the shoes -- he'd take the measurement of your foot -- he'd make the shoes out of just old raw hide-- cowhide; split -- and they was just as hard as rocks and the soles was put on with wooden pegs.

Q. What did he charge for them?

A. I don't know what he charged -- I never did hear. Sometimes they couldn't get shoes for the family. One winter my mother couldn't get shoes for my brother Bill. She took old jeans and pants and things and rolled them up ----- and made him sit in a chair by the fire. They would save the shoes that was wore one winter 'til the next winter and try to hand them down to the second child, but they was so hard, they put them in pot likker and cooked them in old green greasy pot likker and the they couldn't wear them.

Q. What was a day's wages?

A. Fifty cents. Yes, Pa worked a many and many a day for fifty cents. If you had anything, you lived and if you didn't, you didn't.

I can remember when we'd sit down to cornbread and bacon and ate it. My father would go to Shreveport(La.) and do all of his marketing in Shreveport. He'd get a barrel of flour -- you've got the receipt, you know.

Interviewer (Harold E. Rennels): Yes, I have a receipt for two barrels of Super fine flour -- \$12.50.

A. Yes, that's it and he'd get what they called a half keg of sugar and get 100 pounds green coffee and we'd parch that coffee and that sugar and that flour. We'd just have biscuits every once in a while. Ma didn't make cakes out of it or anything like that -----

We went from Coryell to Hill County

Q. Where was it -----

A. Coryell ----- He'd go out every night across the creek -- go across the creek -- we was right in the dege of the timber -- the timber was back this away and the prairie was out this away. There was nothing on that prairie but them wild cattle. Pa and Aunt Sue and Aunt Tilda one day they decided they would ----- horses ----- they went in herds just like the cattle. There was one Bay horse that they wanted to catch, a stallion -- they wanted to catch him.

Q. How did you do your wash?

A. We done it on a rub board and a battling block. We had to make our own soap. We saved the cracklings and all of our grease of every kind and when we had enough Ma would make soap -- lye soap -- we'd save the ashes all the year, put them in a hopper -- a hopper was just like this -- a trough ----- hog killing time -- time to kill hogs -----