

# Granny Remembers

By **Ella Hicks Johnson**  
(1861-1950)



Ella Hicks Johnson

Ella Hicks Johnson was the author of a small booklet, Granny Remembers, in 1928, in which she gave recollections of her childhood in Owensboro, KY. The daughter of Charles Beverly Hicks and Mary Dudley Flynt, she was born 22 September 1861 in Owensboro, Ky. On 30 August 1867 when she was six years old her mother died; Mary D. Hicks has a monument in the Todd family lot in Owensboro's Elmwood Cemetery. Ella's father, his second wife and their children, shortly before 1900 removed to Cincinnati, Ohio, where he died on 19 January 1913 and was buried in Cincinnati's Spring Grove Cemetery. Ella's grandparents, Beverly Alsop Hicks (1794-1870) & Mary Colson Herndon (1796-1867) came to Owensboro from Fayette County, KY during 1860-1867; they both have tombstones in Owensboro's Elmwood Cemetery.

Ella Hicks married James Moreland Johnson (1857-1934) in Owensboro on 31 May 1883; he was the son of Alfred B. Johnson & Martha Moreland.

Messenger & Examiner, Owensboro, KY  
Wednesday, 6 June 1883, p3:

**Johnson—Hicks.**

The marriage of Mr. James M. Johnson, of Louisville, and Miss Ella Hicks, of this city, was quietly celebrated at the residence of the bride's father, Mr. C. B. Hicks, on Fourth street, Tuesday morning, at a quarter past 10 o'clock.

No cards were issued, but a few relatives and friends assembled to witness the ceremony. The bride, who is one of the brightest and prettiest of Owensboro's fair women, wore a traveling costume of crushed strawberry shepherd's plaid, and was attended by Misses Belle Singleton, Sue Luckett, Annie Carter and Nina Luckett. There were no groomsmen. The gallant young man who figures as the groom in this auspicious affair is a native of Owensboro, and received his education here and at the Troy (N.Y.) Polytechnic Institute, where he graduated with distinction as a civil engineer. Genial, honorable and cultivated, he combines in his nature the finest social traits with the dignity and character of the trained student and the exact business man. He has recently connected himself with the Louisville Bridge Company, and has since resided in that city, making periodical visits to his old home.

Mr. and Mrs. Johnson left on the 11 o'clock train by the O. and N. for Louisville.

In Granny Remembers besides her parents she makes references to the following relatives, generally using only their first names: uncle & aunt David F. & Jane Hicks Todd and their boys, John, Bev, Dave, Rob & Charles; Cousin Edward ("Ned") Erwin, the orphan of Edmund C. & Evalina Augusta Hicks Erwin; uncle & aunt Edward C. & Lucy Isabel Hicks Carter and their sons, Jimmy & Bev; stepmother Annie Mathis Hicks; and former slaves, Ellen Todd Balden & Alexander Flint, who resided with the Todd family; all of these lived in Owensboro in the period after the Civil War.

Ella's husband, James Moreland Johnson, had the following obituary in the Owensboro Messenger, Tuesday, 13 February 1934, p9:

# J.M. JOHNSON DIES IN LOUISVILLE

**Native of Owensboro Will  
Be Buried Here At 11  
O'clock This Morning.**

A week after his appointment as city building inspector for Louisville, James Morland Johnson, 76, consulting engineer for many years, died of paralysis at 2 o'clock Monday morning in his residence at 431 Kensington court, Louisville.

A native of Owensboro, and a graduate of the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute at Troy, N. Y., Mr. Johnson was president and chief engineer of the Louisville Bridge and Iron company for thirty years and previously had held several government engineering posts.

After severing his connection with the bridge and iron company in 1913, Mr. Johnson was a consulting engineer with offices in the Louisville Board of Trade building. He was assistant engineer on the construction of the Henderson bridge and served for several months as assistant engineer of the Louisville & Nashville railroad.

He is survived by his widow, Mrs. Ella Hicks Johnson; a daughter, Mrs. Carter Wilson, Nashville, Tenn., and two grandchildren.

Funeral services were conducted at 3 o'clock this afternoon. The body will be brought to Owensboro at 11 o'clock this morning. Burial will follow in the Elmwood cemetery.

Ella Hicks Johnson later resided in Louisville, KY and Nashville, TN. In the latter place she died on 14 May 1950, at the age of 88. She was buried in Owensboro at Elmwood Cemetery, in the northwest end of section D, beside her husband in the Johnson-Moreland family lot. The following obituaries for Ella and her father appeared in the Owensboro newspapers:

Owensboro Messenger, Tuesday, 16 May 1950, p7:

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**Mrs. Ella Hicks Johnson**

Mrs. Ella Hicks Johnson, widow of James Moreland Johnson, died at 12, noon, Sunday at the Nashville hospital, Nashville, Tenn., after a lingering illness. She was born in Owensboro.

Surviving are one daughter, Mrs. Carter Wilson, Nashville; two sisters, Mrs. Evelyn Hicks, and Mrs. Eula Horton, Cincinnati, Ohio; and two grandsons, Lindsey and James Wilson, Nashville. Mrs. S. Y. Sweeney, Owensboro, is a cousin.

The body will arrive in Owensboro at 2:40 p.m. today and be taken to the Elmwood cemetery where services will be conducted at 3 p.m. The Christian Science society will have charge of the services.

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Owensboro Inquirer, Tuesday, 28 January 1913, p6:

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**C. B. HICKS**

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**FORMER OWENSBORO CITIZEN  
DIES IN CINCINNATI**

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**Was 79 Years Old and He Is Survived  
by a Wife and Five  
Children**

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Information has been received in Owensboro announcing the death of Mr. Charles B. Hicks, which occurred in Cincinnati, on Sunday, January 19, at his home, 2312 Adams street. The funeral took place from the residence the following Tuesday with interment at Spring Grove cemetery.

Mr. Hicks was formerly a citizen of Owensboro and for a number of years resided on East Fourth street. At one time he was engaged in the planing mill business and was one of the prominent business men of the city. His family was composed of his wife, and three sons, Charles, Ernest and William Hicks, and two daughters. At the time of his death, Mr. Hicks was 79 years old.



Owensboro Messenger, 2 December 1928, p7:

**Granny Remembers**  
By Ella Hicks Johnson  
A story of Child Life in Owensboro in the '60s.  
An attractive Holiday Gift for  
Young and Old.  
**GANT'S BOOK STORE.** **Sixty Cents.**

Lexington Herald, Lexington, KY, 21 April 1929, Feature section, p8:  
"New Kentucky Books" column

The bookshops are offering "Granny Remembers," by Mrs. Ella Hicks Johnson, of Louisville, and a very interesting bit of autobiographing in fiction form it is. She said in her brief foreword that "the recollections embodied in the following sketch were compiled originally for the entertainment of my grandchildren and their friends. Being written from an adult viewpoint they may prove more interesting to older readers. Therefore, Granny craves the brief and indulgent attention of those who are young and those who are otherwise."

Being keen about her book I asked Mrs. Johnson to set down for me the facts of her life, which she did in part as follows:

"While the scene of this sketch is laid in Owensboro, Kentucky, all of

the grown persons mentioned, even some of the negroes, were born and reared near Lexington. The plantation of my grandfather, Beverly R. Hicks, who was widely known as an educator, adjoined Henry Clay's Ashland. He conducted a school there called Fayette Seminary, and he lived in Lexington until 1868. My mother, Mary Hyat, was a granddaughter of the Peggy Edmonson in the celebrated Indian raid. She was born and reared in what was later known as the Carter place on the Winchester pike. There are many Edmonson descendants in Fayette county.

"My husband and I are both natives of Owensboro (I was born in 1861) but came to Louisville immediately after our marriage in 1881, or nearly forty-eight years ago. He is a consulting engineer. I have done irregular literary work for a number of years, magazine stories for adults and children, and features for newspapers. In 1894 I published a genealogical work which I called 'A Family Memorial,' and that is all until 'Granny Remembers' made her bow. So you see there is a dearth of available publicity in my life—I'm just a plain Kentucky woman with no history except an unusual childhood, the account of which I attempted to put in permanent form in 'Granny.'

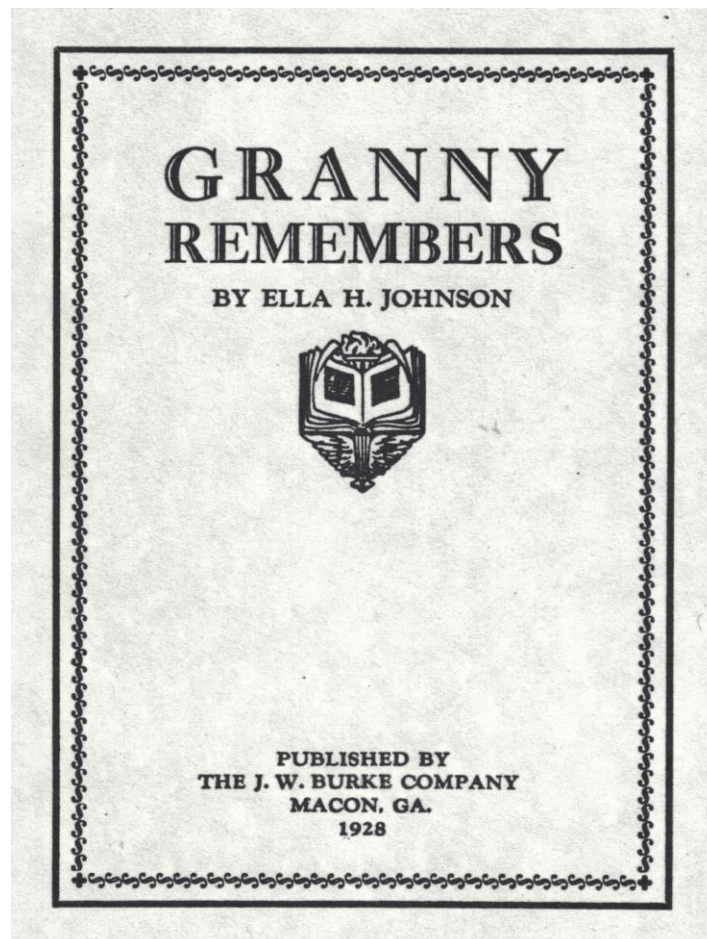
"I have had no picture made for 25 years and am averse to doing it because I am fat. I'm about 5 feet 4 inches and, I suspect, weigh 170. I shun the scales.

"I have no picture of my aunt, Beverly A. Hick's talented daugh-

ter, Mrs. Mary Eliza Herndon, a Kentucky novelist of the long ago, not many of her books. I remember when her 'Oswyn Dudley' and 'Louise Elton' were being read, but that was before I was old enough to do such reading. I do not know how long she lived in Bowling Green. Her second husband was, of course, Lunsford Chiles, of Lexington, and she died there in 1863."

Mrs. Johnson was a recent contributor to the Kentucky Progress magazine. Her "Granny Remembers" is published by the J. W. Burke Company, of Macon, Ga., and should be in every Kentucky library. We hope it is or will be soon.

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**BY MRS. ELLA HICKS JOHNSON**  
**431 KENSINGTON COURT**  
**LOUISVILLE, KY.**

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**MACON, GA.**

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## FOREWORD

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THE recollections embodied in the following sketch were compiled originally for the entertainment of my grand-children and their friends. Being written from an adult viewpoint they may prove more interesting to older readers. Therefore, Granny craves the brief and indulgent attention of those who are young and those who are otherwise.

*Louisville, Ky., May 31, 1928.*





A WAR BABY OF 1861

## GRANNY REMEMBERS



### CHAPTER I

#### A WAR BABY OF 1861

**I** WAS born in 1861, just a few months after the first gun of the War Between the States had been fired in Charleston Harbor and this country had entered the bitter conflict that lasted for four long years—born into a world where sectional feeling ran high, a little hamlet in Southwestern Kentucky, that was a hot-bed of the Confederacy. In other localities family was divided against family, father against son, brother against brother; but in our little world all the people we knew were staunch Secessionists, so love of the South is in my blood. It is a birthmark, almost an obsession. Even at this late



day, when the fire of youth has been replaced by the calmness of age, the strains of "Dixie" bring tears to my eyes and General Lee, our beloved "Mars Robert," is still my one and only hero.

My earliest recollection is a doubted one. My father always insisted that I was far too young to remember it. I persist in thinking I do remember it, and am not just repeating hearsay. Union troops were in possession of our house and had ordered my mother to prepare a meal for them. She appeared to obey, and took me and a negro woman to the outdoor kitchen and from there escaped through a window, and the three of us spent the night in hiding, in a turnip field. Now this is what I think I remember, lying in my mother's lap and looking up at the stars.

Presently she put her hand over my eyes and said, "Go to sleep, Ella." I don't remember where we were, but I do remember the stars, her hand over my eyes and being told to go to sleep. Father and I always disagreed about it. He said I couldn't; I said, and still say, "I do."

My mother's mother, who lived in Missouri, following a family custom, had sent me, at my birth, a negro boy and girl, Alex and Mimi, about ten and twelve years old respectively. My next recollection is of a line of bluecoated soldiers picketed along our front fence. My father, in irons, was brought to the gate and my mother allowed to speak to him from the front steps; no nearer. I never knew why it occurred nor what it was all about, but Mimi carried me down and held me up while I put my head

between the bayonets and kissed him. Being manacled, he couldn't raise his hands. He was later taken away as he had come, under guard.

The Federal gun-boats, as they passed up and down the river, usually shelled the town, on general principles, I suppose, and I grew to know the whine of the bombs as they passed over the house; we were so close to the river that they always fell beyond us.

There were days when every one went about with hushed movements while rows and rows of marching blue-coats went through the street. We watched them furtively through jalousies, as all the houses were closed, shuttered and deserted-looking. Some one, my aunt, perhaps, said: "The whole Union army must be going by," and some one replied, "This isn't a drop in the bucket."

For years I puzzled over this remark. It was too much for my childish understanding. Even now I never hear the expression without seeing that darkened room and hearing the sound of those tramping, tramping feet.

Then there were days when a cluster of tents was pitched in a nearby field, and every one moved heaven and earth to take these gray-clad men all the food and clothing that could possibly be spared from our own scanty store, for these were "our boys"; our own "Johnny Rebs," and we'd all gladly go hungry and cold to aid them. We were ready to live and die for Dixie.

I had developed into a runaway. Early in the morning, when Mimi was dressing me, I'd twist out of her hands, unbuttoned and unbrushed, and dart away to my favorite neighbors and present myself in the dining-



room, where I was welcomed, buttoned and given a seat at the breakfast table—unless Mimi followed me too closely.

My father had a fine pointer dog named Ponto, who was sent to get me if he were within call. He'd catch my small garments in his mouth, turn me around and push me ignominiously before him, and neither yells nor coaxing had any effect upon him. Sometimes I would drop on the ground screaming with rage, but he'd never loose his hold. He'd wait till I got up or someone came to help him. He had been sent to bring me back and bring me back he did, once from the edge of the river when I had sneaked away while older backs were turned, for those were busy days, filled with many unaccustomed duties. Always after these returns, Ponto was petted and praised and I was

spanked with a hair-brush; but experience taught me nothing. Again and again I'd run away, and again and again my mother used the hair-brush. One exploit was almost fatal. I ran over to "our tents" and was being highly entertained by a sick soldier when Ponto appeared and relentlessly marched me home. The harm was done, however. The man broke out with smallpox, and so did I, and for a time my life hung in the balance, but I came through unscarred and none of the household had it.

Ponto was a magnificent bird-dog and a most intelligent animal. He brought the mail from the post office, where it was put in his mouth by the postmaster, and he refused to deliver it to anyone outside the house. It must be done in-doors. He did the family marketing on the credit system, carrying a

basket with lists for the butcher and the grocer, and he always brought the packages back untouched. He was a feature of the small town and became so famous that he was finally stolen, to the regret of every one—even myself.

The first plaything I recall was a good-sized doll trunk, for that place and time quite a pretentious toy. I was alone in my mother's room one day, playing with this trunk when suddenly a Confederate soldier sprang through the open window, followed quickly by two Yankees, who fired at him. They ran through the house and killed him at the door of the outside kitchen. I had run under the bed with my cherished trunk, thinking they had taken everything else and they'd take that also. I was too terrorized to answer when I heard my mother's agonized tones,

"Ella! Ella! O my God! Where is Ella?" I finally gathered strength to crawl out and let her see that I hadn't been shot, but we were a shaken household that day.

Guerrilla bands, formed from the malcontents of both armies, harried an already harassed community. One of these bands burned our county courthouse in broad daylight for the sheer pleasure of destroying. I stood on the steps of our gallery and watched the burning sheets from books and papers rise and fall in fiery showers.

When the war was over, the stricken South stooped to pick up its staggering burden and adjust itself to a changed order of living.

Then came the carpet-bag administration and the Ku Klux. A tap on the door, a white face at the window. No word was



said but the men of the family rose and quietly disappeared, and after varied lengths of time, as quietly returned. Sometimes these rappings came late at night, and when I heard them I lay still in my bed. I didn't know what they meant, but I knew enough to be quiet and ask no questions. And for me that was knowing a good deal, because I was an interrogation-point. I asked questions in season and out. Aunt Lizzie, my mother's sister, was living with us, and one day I plied her with questions till she was desperate. At last I asked, "What makes 'em call a chair a chair?" "Mary," she called to my mother, "take this child out of here. She has asked me ten questions in fifteen minutes and I can't answer any of them."

My inquiring turn of mind and fancy for experiment often got me into trouble. Once

I stewed some apple peelings, water and sugar, in a tin box that had held brass caps for Father's gun. I had terrible pains in my "tummy" from poisoning, but fortunately, very promptly, nearly threw up my small heels, and so removed the stew and no harm resulted.

Down in our big back yard a swing was hung from the limb of a large pear tree. This was my favorite place of amusement and I not only swung but played under this tree. One day I found a young jaybird lying on the ground. I knew it had fallen from its nest in the pear tree and I picked it up and started to the house. The mother bird flew around me scolding shrilly, but I ran on. Then the mother bird lit on my head and began to peck me. I screamed and Mimi came running down the long back steps. "Drop

the bird, Ella," she called, "drop it." But I held on to it though the blood was streaming over my face from the blows of the bird's bill on my forehead. "Throw the bird down," called Mimi again, still running, but I stumbled on, screaming and blinded by the blood until Mimi reached me, tore the young bird from my hand and drove away the mother. Then she carried me, still shrieking over my wounds and the loss of the bird, to the house where my head was dressed and I was comforted with a large stiff slice of quince marmalade. My mother told me the little bird's mother was taking care of the bird baby just as my mother was taking care of me.

One summer, probably 1866, my father, my mother and I went out to Missouri to visit my mother's family. My grandmother lived about a hundred miles from St. Louis,

and we traveled to St. Louis on one of the floating palaces that represented the height of elegance in river steamers. From there we had a long, tiresome journey by stage-coach. My recollections of this homestead are: great stretches of prairie and the mournful calling of whippoorwills. I remember being shown a place in the eaves of the garret and told that a Confederate soldier had been hidden there, by my grandmother. He had crept through a cornfield to the back yard where she was boiling some clothes in an old soap kettle. She had no soap but was trying to get some effect from the soap that was soaked in the kettle. Her slaves had left her when they were freed. My aunt was in town, so Grandmother was alone on the place. The fugitive soldier begged her to hide him, which she readily did and got back to the



soap kettle before the pursuing blue-coats arrived. They searched the place while she went calmly on with her work, though she knew if he were discovered she would be arrested, and the very lightest penalty for harboring him would be the confiscation of all her property. In Missouri, Federal law was brutally administered by those in authority. But the searchers failed to find him and he stayed several days for a much-needed rest.

We came back to Cincinnati on one of the splendid boats that was afterwards destroyed in a collision, the *United States*, I think it was. That boat and the *America* came together in one of the most dreadful river tragedies on record.

Lincoln's successor, President Johnson, was on board our boat. I walked up to him, with my hands behind my back, and very

pertly told him I was a Rebel. He laughed, took me on his lap and talked to me as long as I would stay. Early the next morning I was out on deck alone. I had dragged a chair from the ladies' cabin out to the guards, and was standing on it, leaning over to watch the water. The President came along and, lifting me down, said he didn't want me to fall overboard and drown, even if I were a little Rebel. He stood and talked to me until my father came to take me to breakfast.

From Cincinnati we took a long, winding stage journey to visit my father's sister in Grant County, Kentucky. The road was rough and hilly and the stage coach rocked and swayed in a most terrifying manner. On one bad turn my mother's sole-leather bonnet-trunk bounced off the stage and went toppling wildly down a steep hillside. The

language of the poor driver, before he replaced the truant article was as tall as the hill. After a fearful shaking up we finally reached the house, and the visit was a blissful one for me. A little branch of Eagle Creek ran through the grounds, and such mud pies and such rock dams I had never made. The house was said to be haunted, but, of course, at that time I didn't know it. I have no remembrance of the trip home from there, except stopping for a while at a hotel in Louisville. I don't know how we got there nor how we got home.

My mother became ill, dreadfully ill—congestive chill, the doctor said—and for a while seemed to be improving. One day we went to dinner, leaving with her a little bell to ring if she wanted anything. Presently it rang, and every one ran to her. Mammy

reached her first. "Lift me up," she said. Mammy lifted her and held her and when Father, Aunt Lizzie and I got there, my mother was dead.

Very shortly after Mother's death, we moved to a new house my father had built for her. Aunt Lizzie kept house. Mammy and her husband, Uncle Henry, did most of the work and Mimi looked after me. I played a little with Eliza, Mammy's daughter, just a year my senior. Everyone, except Mimi, was kind to me—but I wasn't happy in my new house. I suppose I missed my mother.

Mimi had made my life a burden by telling me terrible ghost stories and had me under control. For instance, when I was playing in the yard she'd send me up to the house for biscuit and butter. Aunt Lizzie



would give me several, which I'd carry back to Mimi, who would eat them, never giving me a crumb. She'd tell me the horrible ghost with a rattling chain would get me if I told on her. At meals my aunt would exclaim at my appetite, and wonder how I could eat so much. I'd look at Mimi and cower. The "rattling chain" was an effective weapon. She was supposed to sit with me at night until I went to sleep, when again the ghost was raised. I'd lie paralyzed with fear while she walked off with the candle and left me in a darkness peopled with hideous fancies. Poor woman: she finally died, blind and bed-ridden, perhaps in return for her cruelty to me. In some way Mammy found out what she was doing, and she was sent to live where there were no children.

After that I played with Eliza to my

heart's content. We had wonderful make-believe tea-parties, with the broken pieces of glass and china we dug from the ground, and we constructed ingenious houses of sticks.

Aunt Lizzie had the idea then prevalent that a little girl's complexion must be carefully shielded. She'd tie a sun-bonnet on me when I started out to play and in a short time it hung from my neck. At last she worked two button-holes in the top, pulled two locks of my hair through and braided them. After an hour or two I got the scissors, cut the hair off and removed the bonnet. After a second cutting she gave it up. I suppose she thought I might as well be black as shorn.

Uncle Henry was most entertaining to Eliza and me. We'd listen by the hour to stories of his experiences as a wagoner during the war, and we never grew tired of the tale

of the time in Louisiana he sat down on a rusty log that proved to be an alligator. He made this most dramatic and we saw vividly all the dangers he escaped from the 'gator to the "Jacky-my-lantern" in the swamp. But with it all I wasn't happy. I missed my mother. This part of my life seems to be in a box all by itself. It doesn't mingle with any of the rest of it.

Then Aunt Lizzie went back to Missouri because her mother was sick and my father's niece came as housekeeper. We moved to another house and it was here I was guilty of a dreadful piece of vandalism. A portrait of my grandmother, in Missouri, hung over the high mantelpiece in the parlor and the eyes appeared to follow one wherever one moved. I suppose I had been terribly naughty and was suffering the stings of conscience.

By means of a table and a chair I climbed up on the mantel and with a pair of scissors, stuck holes in the eyes of the portrait of my grandmother, so she couldn't watch me.

My father gave me the thing I most dreaded — a "talking to" — wherein he stressed the enormity of my destruction and moved me to bitter tears of contrition and very shortly an indignant family in Missouri demanded the instant return of the portrait.



## CHAPTER II

### AUNT JANE'S HOUSE

AUNT Jane's house sat back—far back—in a big yard, and over the front entrance grew a wonderful wistaria vine strong enough to bear the weight of a large man on its twisted branches and, in season, a riot of long, purple blooms.

The house had many large, square rooms and from the upper windows—especially the garret—there was a magnificent view of the river.

A big mulberry tree grew in one corner of the yard and we and the squirrels gorged on the ripened fruit. "We" were eight boys and myself. Aunt Jane's five—John and Bev, the two "big boys;" Dave and Rob, the middle ones; Charlie, her youngest, and Ned, an



A MID-VICTORIAN SPORTS COSTUME

orphaned nephew who lived with her. Then there were Aunt Lucy's two sons; Jimmy and Bev—little Bev, the youngest of all of us—who spent as much time as possible at Aunt Jane's and I almost considered it my home. I slept in a trundle bed in Aunt Jane's room and she and Uncle David humored me—the “motherless little girl”—far more than was good for me.

There was a vast garden where all sorts of vegetables grew; a patch of strawberries of untold sweetness; raspberries—red, black and yellow—around the fence; gooseberries and currants in lustrous shades of green and crimson; watermelons that we broke like vandals, eating the heart only, and leaving the rest to rot, and cantaloupes that we scorned. Yards and yards of morning-glories and Cherokee roses twined over the broken fences

for there was no one to work this plot of plenty except my boy, Alex, and the two big boys.

Out beyond the white front fence was a wide dirt road usually dusty or muddy, then a stretch of grass plot to a steep bank. At the foot of this bank a sandy beach and the beautiful Ohio River with a green island upstream and the low green Indiana shore a mile across. This was our Paradise. We had a disreputable and leaky old “dinky” boat that we kept supplied with empty tin cans, for it was necessary for at least one of her crew to bail steadily during her passage. In low water we pulled and paddled about in the most reckless way and in high water dragged our boat to safety. When the river was frozen over we “skeeted” through the smooth places as far out as we dared and



often raced back when the ice began to crack under our weight. Only the big boys had skates. The "small fry" slipped and slid in a fearfully fascinating way that was a heavy tax on our shoes. The sandy bank was a sheer drop of about forty feet, honey-combed with the nests of sand martins. We used to burrow into those holes and only the Providence said to care for children and fools kept us from being buried in the sand or drowned in the river.

We knew the whistle of every boat that passed and the songs of the deck hands were quite as familiar to us and far more popular than those we sang at Sunday School, from our singing book, the Oriola.

All of us sang and Bev had a good tenor voice. We rattled bones and Ned played the juice (Jews) harp and the French harp—

Alex sometimes joined us, patted juba and added his bass voice to our childish ones and we thoroughly enjoyed our own performances.

We certainly led the simple life: plain food, plain clothes and looked out for ourselves. Our poor over-worked elders were too busy trying to piece together the shattered warp of daily living to oversee us. It was the survival of the fittest. On this plantation there had been many slaves. Aunt Jane had had ten women as house servants. Now there were only Alex and Aunt Ellen, the cook. She had left with freedom but soon returned and stayed the rest of her life. We shifted for ourselves.

Ned, poor fellow, went down to defeat when, in spite of Alex's protests and our disapproval, he persisted in his determination

to knock down a hornet's nest that hung from a thorn tree in the side yard. All of us retired to safety when we found he was bent on doing it and he was their only victim. They stung his face and head, got under his little cottonade clothes and stung his entire body. He was desperately ill for weeks but finally recovered, having lost the sight of one eye.

His favorite form of amusement was to go to the garret, hitch long cotton strips to his big toes and mounting a trunk, drive the toe-horses with much hammering of heels in galloping, for hours at a stretch. He finally had callous rings around his toes from much rubbing of these reins.

We had to provide our own amusements but we were very happy in doing it. We dug sassafras roots in the early spring—for the sassafras tea that was considered an excellent

spring medicine—not because we wanted it, but for the mere pleasure of digging. The most interesting feature of the spring was the cleaning of the chimneys. A large muscovy drake—strong and broad of wing—was taken to the roof and dropped down the chimney. He descended with much flapping and squawking amid showers of loosened wood soot, and the remembrance of his appearance of outraged dignity as he waddled out on the floor makes me smile whenever I recall the circumstance.

We ate May-apples and paw-paws, persimmons, walnuts, large and small hickory nuts as the seasons came along. On one side of the plantation ran a long narrow lane, stake-and-ridered as to fence with masses of Virginia creeper twining over it and hoarhound and spearmint growing in the fence corners,



with blackberry bushes all along the sides, where we gathered juicy berries and got full of ticks.

Beyond the garden lay a big apple orchard, all the fruit going to waste except what we ate or stored for the winter. There was no one to gather the crop, no one to buy it if it were gathered. No sugar to preserve fruit of any kind, so it went to waste. For a long time sugar was an extreme luxury. New Orleans molasses and a thick, dark sorghum furnished our only sweets. A candy-pulling with its gorge of sweetness was bliss unspeakable in more senses than one as conversation was impossible with a mouth filled with molasses candy. I wonder what the pampered little folks of today would think of a Christmas where a candy apple was untold riches and a little tin toy like those purchased today

at any dime store, filled us with joy! As times improved and Christmas brought more lavish gifts, Mammy says—I don't remember this—that I got greedy and tied strings around the legs of a pair of my panties and hung them up instead of a stocking. Out in the orchard there stood an old cider mill that we operated at pleasure and drank the fresh, warm apple juice, flavored with rust from the mill, with utter disregard of consequences. But the orchard was so infested with bees and wasps feeding on the apples that it wasn't attractive to a lot of barefooted boys. It hurt my feet to go barefooted so in spite of jeers, I always wore my slippers. Later the hogs and chickens ate the fallen fruit but at first there were no hogs nor chickens. We gave to one set of soldiers and the other set took whatever we had, so every source of

supply had to be started afresh.

No one had any money, but we didn't mind, as we were all poor alike. There were no contrasts. Confederate money had lost its value, and we had no other. In some cases it was taken out the back door in a barrel and burned. It wasn't worth the paper it was printed on.

On one occasion, Dave, in some way, acquired a paper twenty-five cent piece, probably in payment for some work he had done. He spent hours trying to decide what to buy with it, often with the rest of us sitting around in solemn conclave. At that period it was customary to find thrown in the yards, sample sheets of the "Fireside Companion" and the "Chimney Corner," containing extracts from thrilling continued stories and many catch-penny advertisements.

One of these proposed "for the small sum of 25 cents" to instruct one "how to write without pen and ink." After much painful doubt, Dave mailed them the hoarded "shin plaster" and in due time received this reply: "Write with a pencil." This was tragedy, dreadful tragedy, and for a time all concerned were plunged into deepest gloom. One of Dave's friends had sent a paper ten cent piece for "Valuable Information" and was told: "In using a knife, always cut from you." In time the government stopped these swindlers, but just then it was too busy with post-war problems to notice the small offender, and Dave's wealth was wasted.

One day, for some reason known only to the mind of childhood, Charlie, Jimmy and I induced Alex to go with us across a "new cut road" into a neighbor's melon patch.



Why, with plenty at home, I can't say. The overseer discovered us and ordered us off, but we carried our spoils with us—all except Alex, who ran as fast as possible and disappeared in the orchard. We didn't make much speed with the heavy melons and just as we were crossing a little foot bridge into our own grounds, the overseer fired at us with a gun loaded with bird shot. Some of the shot hit my feet and only stung me through my slippers. Jimmy escaped altogether, but Charlie's bare feet were peppered with shot. It is needless to say the melons were dropped then and there and we went roaring and howling to the house where Uncle David, Charlie's father, who was a physician, had to pick the shot from his feet. That operation completed, Uncle David departed in great wrath to interview the owner of the next plantation as

to the overseer's conduct. The man, it seems, didn't intend striking us, didn't know he had, and only meant to frighten us. He certainly succeeded for we felt as if we had escaped from the jaws of death and never again did we cross that boundary line.

Apples, pop-corn and nuts provided our winter refreshments and our principal occupation in the winter evenings was making lamp-lighters. Some one would cut strips from newspapers, wrapping paper and even letters and we'd twist them into tapering spikes with turned-over tops and place them in vases and other holders on the mantels and tables. A small, flat box of evil-smelling sulphur matches cost fifty cents, which were carefully conserved, to be used only in emergency. A supply of those paper tapers was a necessity in every household. We worked by fire-light

as coal oil was quite expensive and good candles nearly as high.

Early one cold morning, Alex came in and said, "Miss Jane, come out on the back gallery and see what's here." Of course we rushed out and I imagine few persons ever saw what we did. A covey of partridges—the shy Bob Whites—at the back steps, driven by hunger and thirst to a house, peeping like turkeys and plainly asking to be fed. Alex wanted to kill them but Aunt Jane said, "No, indeed. Don't touch them. When little, helpless things like these come to me for aid I certainly will protect them." So one of the boys gave them a pan filled with water and she sent Alex to fix them a hot mash of meal and water. My! how they drank and how they ate—the pretty, little, wild, brown things! Then she had them tolled into the

corncrib where they were well sheltered and cared for for several days and when the snow melted they quietly disappeared.

The boys always had guinea pigs which they liked, but I didn't. Dull, foolish little things, smelly and uninteresting. But I loved a pet coon that Charlie kept chained in the barn. Its little black nose, large ringed tail and smart, funny ways amused me. On one occasion when I was at home, that is at Father's, because Charlie had the measles, he realized that no one had fed the coon while he was in bed. So he slipped out of a window on to the roof of the back gallery, slid down a column and ran to the barn. When he attempted to feed the coon, the poor famished little creature fell on him and in a flash tore his thumbs to pieces. Uncle David's medical skill was taxed to patch them up. The coon



suddenly disappeared. I never saw him again and I grieved over it.

I stayed at Aunt Jane's and played with those boys fully two-thirds of the time. They never gave me any quarter because I was a girl, but fought me just as they fought one another. I couldn't use my fists as effectively as they did, but I scratched and pulled hair, so we were even. I was just one of them. Once a little girl about my age, who was visiting in the neighborhood, wanted to go with us to dig sassafras. The boys refused with one voice—"You can't go, you're a girl." "But," she replied, "Ella's going." "Of course Ella's going, but girls can't go." This seemed to be a recognized condition in the community. Uncle David was a stock-holder in the county fair company and we loved Fair Week and were ready to go before the

grown-ups. So we'd walk out daily and the gatekeeper would look us over. "These the Todd boys?" he'd ask. We'd answer, "Yes," and be admitted. No one ever questioned my presence. Once, when I was at Father's, a little girl came to play with me and I had no idea how to play with her. We couldn't get together. At last I said, "If I give you this little doll bowl and pitcher will you go home?" She assented and I saw her depart with a feeling of relief.

It was somewhere about this period that Rob, the quietest one of all of us, met disaster in an experiment. The hen house sat well up on a mound to insure proper drainage, high enough to be reached by several steps. Rob decided to blow up the hen house. He carefully tunneled a hole some distance through the mound, planted a charge of pow-

der and connected it with a fuse. When this was lighted there was no result. And as usual, when Rob stooped to peer inside, the powder ignited but the only thing blown up was Rob's face. His hair was singed around the edges, eye-brows and lashes entirely burned off and bad, blue burns on his face. His eyes escaped but he carried some blue scars all his life. The hens were entirely undisturbed as the powder blew out instead of up. It can be seen that we were never dull. There was always something to avert monotony.

With all her cares and sorrows, Aunt Jane was never too occupied to attend to our childish troubles and injuries. We soon learned to care for ourselves or for one another in such matters as cut fingers, stubbed toes, bee strings, etc. Only the more serious hurts were

taken to her and I never knew her to fail to attend the sufferer with loving sympathy, and in all those trying years, I never knew her to scold one of us, though we often deserved it.

As time went on and circumstances improved, the social customs of the locality were resumed. The chief form of entertaining was a dining—a huge banquet in the middle of the day with both men and women as guests.

The children always had to wait for the second table and we often peeped in at window or door and wondered: "How long, O Lord! how long" were the grown-ups going to eat, and would they leave enough for us? Aunt Jane didn't approve of this custom, though she sometimes followed it.

On one occasion she had arranged for the



other children to have their meal on the back gallery and Ned and I were placed at a side table in the dining room, a table with drop leaves that opened at each end. When desert time came, Alex placed the big turkey dish, several vegetable dishes, etc., on this table where we sat. We began to sway back and forth, Ned holding his leaf and I mine. No one noticed us and we kept this up until the supports under the leaves slipped, throwing us to the floor and turkey, gravy, dressing, carving knife and fork, vegetables and china came down upon us in a most horrible mess. Even then I don't remember Aunt Jane scolding. Her only concern was lest we had been hurt—and we weren't.

She was short and stout with most adorable pin-cushiony hands and she'd sit down at her piano and play by ear, the most inspiring

music. "Dixie," "Irish Washer-woman," "Mrs. McLeod's Reel," "Old Zip Coon," "Highland Fling," etc.,—using the very same bass to every single one of them and never making a discord.

The only horse she had was an old sorrel mare named Dove, which was driven to a rockaway and this one must have been of an elastic variety, judging by the number of children who could be packed in beside Aunt Jane, with Alex or one of the big boys to drive. Many trips ambling old Dove made daily between town and home. The distance was short but rather too long to walk and so when it became time for even Charlie to go to school, Uncle David decided that it would be better for them to live in town. In addition to this the gradual caving of the river bank threatened to injure the place. Indeed,



it was only a few years before the inroads of the water made it necessary to abandon the house which finally fell into the river.

So the Todds moved to town and our happy-go-lucky plantation-days were over.

### CHAPTER III

#### AUNT LUCY

AUNT JANE and Aunt Lucy were my father's sisters, and Aunt Lucy — the one my father, my mother and I visited in Grant County at the close of the war—had soon after removed to our town and now the three families were established within a few blocks of one another and the children were together every day. My father had married again and there were babies at home and although my stepmother was kindness itself, we were freer at the other places. Aunt Jane's town house had a large back yard and my cousins and their playmates gathered there every afternoon and I was always on hand. I was being sent regularly to school but I wasn't much interested in it. Eliza was

detailed to take me back and forth the short distance, not because it wasn't safe and I wasn't perfectly able to go, but because my runaway tendencies often took me far from the right path. A new house being built would claim my attention and I'd climb all over it with the workmen, who knew me and all about me after the fashion of country communities. Alex was selling vegetables given him by Uncle David in partial payment for his work in raising them and if I encountered his wagon, I promptly mounted the seat beside him, drove the mule and rang the hand bell to call out his customers. I have often ridden with him over his scattered route when I was supposed to be at school, and when my truancy was discovered, Eliza was pressed into service to deliver me safely and promptly into the class room of the Bransford Insti-

tute and to return for me at its hour of closing. Miss Dora Miller was my teacher and I was quite fond of her, but certainly was no star pupil. I think I remember her because she gave me a framed picture of some squirrels that I treasured for years.

One day, in sliding down a winding stair rail, I lost my balance and landed broadside on the paved floor of an entrance court. For a few minutes I was stunned and the school was soon in a panic. When I recovered consciousness, I was lying with my head in Miss Dora's lap and every pupil in the school was peeping at me over the upper railing. I shall never forget that battery of eyes. A doctor came, looked me over, said I wasn't seriously hurt and took me home in his buggy, somewhat shaken up, but I quickly recovered. However, I have a notion that that was the

last slide I ever took down a stair rail. Since then I have used the steps.

On rainy afternoons when we were at Aunt Jane's, if we'd promise to be very careful, we were allowed to take turn-about looking at a stereoscope. How wonderful was the scenery from Niagara Falls, from the Yosemite Valley, from Watkin's Glen, from Switzerland, Scotland, Ireland, etc. In these days of travel pictures, no one can understand the amazingness of those views to the child of the early '70s. But generally on indoor days we played "Authors" and even now I remember a number of writers and their books from those cards. I doubt if we even knew there were such things as regular playing cards. I was married before I knew one card from another. In the Presbyterian atmosphere in which we were reared they were considered

an invention of the devil. Our religious life was very rigid, especially the observance of the Sabbath. We went to Sabbath School and church in the morning, singing school in the afternoon and church again at night, prayer meeting on Wednesday night and a daylight prayer meeting on New Year's morning that always opened with the singing of this hymn:

"Come, let us anew  
Our journey pursue.  
Roll around with the year  
And never stand still  
Till the Master appear," etc.

and how puzzled I was as to how "rolling around with the year" was to be accomplished. Children have queer ideas of such hymns as they seem to hear them. I know



of one man who said he thought for years that "This consecrated cross I'll bear," was "This consecrated cross-eyed bear." And another one interpreted "Bring forth the royal diadem and crown Him Lord of all," as "Bring forth the royal Bengal tiger and let him walk around."

Father and Uncle Ed., Aunt Lucy's husband, were interested in a saw-mill out on Panther Creek and Uncle Ed. only spent Sunday at home. So we spent our evenings, whenever possible, with Aunt Lucy, who read us most interesting stories. For instance, the Life of Kit Carson that was being published as a serial in some weekly paper. I can recall her plainly, seated in her favorite ladder-back chair, with her abundant soft hair and deep blue eyes, reading to us tirelessly in her beautifully modulated voice. She invented

guessing games of all sorts that we played around the fire or on the side gallery according to the time of year. She always held our attention in anything she told us because she knew how to bring out the points of a story, and she'd teach us without our knowing that we were being taught. She'd laugh with us but never at us and, like Aunt Jane, she never scolded. However, once she punished Jimmy, her elder son, and me. I don't know what we had done but it must have been a serious offense. She tied each of us to different posts of a large four-poster bed and left us in this active disgrace for perhaps an hour. When she returned she was aghast and so were we. We had managed to pull that heavy bed nearly across the room and in its passage the carpet was dragged from the floor and the room was a wreck. Even

with this, all I remember is being untied.

She'd sing us folk songs—versions I have never seen nor heard anywhere else—of Lord Lovell and Lady Nancy Bell; of The King's Daughter and a tell-tale parrot; of Old Gray Heath who came over the sea and of the familiar "Where Have you Been, Billy Boy?" They were foolish jingles and singsongy, but we loved them.

All of us had had our minds filled with hair-raising ghost stories that scared us half out of our wits but had a dreadful attraction for us and we always wanted to hear them. We'd beg Aunt Lucy until she'd finally tell us what we called "The Family Ghost Story" of a great-aunt who had lived in the "haunted house" in Grant County. Aunt Betty died from an illness supposed to have been caused by her habit of eating charcoal. The story

ran that every night at midnight, Aunt Betty would open the door of her former bedroom, no matter how securely it was fastened. The swish of her blue silk dress could be heard as she walked and the click of her heels on the floor. She'd sit in a low rocker, reach into the ashes with the tongs, pull out a piece of charred wood, eat it and depart with the swish and the click. Such a gentle harmless ghost, minding her own business! One unbelieving niece had said years ago, that she didn't know they kept up with the fashions in Heaven—for when Aunt Betty died, heels had never been worn. This ghost story was widely circulated and outsiders were not anxious to spend the night in the house. One night, however, Aunt Lucy said, a friend came to visit her and in the night wakened every one by piercing shrieks. Aunt Lucy



lighted a candle and ran into the room, finding the woman hysterical from fright. She insisted she had seen a ghost standing at the foot of her four-poster bed. Aunt Lucy laughed and said, "I reckon you saw this old woman you've dressed up on the bed-post." On retiring she had hung her clothes on the bed-post and topped them with a night cap Aunt Lucy had given her but which she hadn't used. In a dim light it could easily be seen as a ghostly figure and the haunted house stories aided the fancy. Aunt Lucy always pointed out that there was a natural explanation of a ghost story; it was the result of excited imagination or a plain, wilful lie. She related one small incident that occurred in this house that somehow made a lasting impression upon me. One cool day when fires were burning, but the doors open, a small negro girl came

to her and said: "Miss Lucy, come in the dining room. There's the prettiest thing in there I ever saw." Quite curious, she followed the child, and there coiled on the hearth evidently seeking warmth, was a huge rattlesnake. You can imagine her surprise. The snake was promptly left in possession of the room until she could summon a negro man who dispatched the "pretty thing," breaking its back and then killing it. I can see that snake just as plainly as if I had been there at the time.

She used to tell us many pioneer stories, some she had heard or read and some she knew were true. Of the latter this one happened in Fayette County where she was born and reared. A school teacher, whose name was McKinney, was attacked one afternoon when he was alone in his little log school



house, by a wildcat that had crept through the open doors. It sprang on him and buried its teeth in his side. He had no weapon and the only thing he could do was to press the cat, with all his force, against his heavy, rough desk. He pressed so hard he finally killed it and persons attracted by the noise who came to his rescue, had great difficulty in removing the dead animal from his side, as its teeth had been locked over his ribs by the pressure. He recovered quickly from his wounds, and the noise made by the screams of McKinney and the howls of the wildcat passed into local usage to indicate the most awful outcry that could be made.

But the story that thrilled us beyond measure was of the wife of our own Revolutionary ancestor who came from Virginia just after that war, to occupy a land grant in the

blue-grass region. A small settlement had sprung up here and for some time things had been so peaceful the settlers believed that Indian troubles were over. Suddenly, however, the men were summoned to defend the fort at Boonesboro. They left early one morning expecting to return by night fall. When the long summer evening wore on and the men had not returned, our great-great-grandmother, Peggy Edmonson, became uneasy. She had everyone come to her cabin, the largest one in the settlement, to spend the night. With gibes and laughter all the women and children collected there, regarding it as a frolic and refusing to take a serious view of the situation. Nevertheless, Grandmother barred the door and placed guards at the windows which had no glass but only solid swinging wooden shutters. One woman,

Betsy Bledsoe, was very scornful. "Whatever ails you, Peggy," she said, "to be so scary? I've just about come to the belief that most of those Indian tales are lies." "Quit your foolishness, every one of you," answered Peggy heatedly, "and listen to me. The turkeys we heard gobbling in the woods today weren't turkeys, and the owls hooting out there right now aren't owls. They are all Indians. If the men aren't back by morning those red devils will be here after us. We can't hold out long because we have only three rifles and not much powder. If we are captured and carried off, tear a thread or rag from your clothes, if you can, and drop it as you go, and when you step on a little plant try to break it so the men can find our trail. They won't kill us unless the men are too close behind, they'd rather take us prisoners.

But if they have to run and leave us they will sound the war whoop. That will be the signal to each Indian to tomahawk all around him and escape, so when they whoop, jump behind the nearest tree, for they won't stop to chase you."

"Lord! Peggy," again spoke Betsey Bledsoe, "you sure are scary. Me—I'm going to sleep."

Peggy and her aids took turn about standing guard, and the inmates of the cabin slept as well as they could in such close quarters. At the first ray of dawn a turkey gobbled loudly. Peggy sprang for her rifle. "Watch the windows," she called, "I'll watch the door."

"Peggy—" started Betsey.

"Shut up!" snapped Peggy. "I know a



turkey and I know an Indian. That was an Indian."

She had barely finished speaking when a fearful whoop arose from many savage throats, striking terror to the hearers. "Watch the windows," Peggy cried. "They will try that way while they are making this noise in front."

Sure enough the women at the windows fired at once, halting the Indians who were sneaking up the back while the others advanced noisily to the door. Peggy fired and the leader fell. With a howl of rage, the band charged the door, but the tough wood withstood the blows. Peggy fired into them, wounding some of them slightly as they were too close to the loop holes to allow correct aim. The two women in the back kept up

an intermittent firing as a savage appeared. Inside the cabin was a deathly stillness, broken only by the sounds of re-loading done by grim women who received and returned the rifles to the lookouts. Even the infants seemed to know their lives were at stake and none uttered a sound. At last most of the Indians withdrew to the woods and Peggy knew the end was near. They soon returned with a log to use as a battering ram. Peggy fired shot after shot with as much delay as possible, hoping to hold them at bay until the men came. But at last the powder was gone and they were beaten. She repeated her instructions of the night before and very soon the door crashed in. These painted red skins quickly collected every inmate and marched them out in twos and threes, under guard of



a warrior. Peggy went first, her two children, Mary and Alex, holding close to her arms, where she held the two-year-old child of a young mother who had a nursing baby to carry. They marched in silence many weary hours and Peggy's hopes began to flag, when suddenly the savage war-whoop rang out on the summer air. Heeding Peggy's warning, every one jumped and avoided the swinging death weapon except Betsey Bledsoe, who either could not or would not jump. She and her young baby were killed and the Indians fled. Almost at once the whites arrived and the captives were safe.

We huddled about Aunt Lucy in an ecstasy of terror that never lost its tang. She dramatized the pathos of this meeting. The cries and sobs, the prayers of thankfulness,

and sorrow for poor Betsey's fate. Our eyes grew round with fear. The shadows were peopled with hideous painted faces and every gust of wind became a war cry.



BLACK SILK APRONS WERE VERY  
STYLISH IN 1866

## CHAPTER IV

### PANTHER CREEK

**T**HE saw-mill in which Father and Uncle Ed. were interested was situated in a wild district on Panther Creek, a sluggish stream that was, however, wide enough and deep enough in places to float the logs for the mill. The sawyer and the mill hands with their families lived near the mill and this was where Uncle Ed. spent his week-days. One of our greatest pleasures was a day spent going to and from and at the mill. It was about fifteen miles from town and we'd go out on one of the wagons that usually brought the planks back to the planing mill in town. For our transportation, however, a body was placed on the wagon bed, furnished with chairs for the grown-ups and

planks across for us. Aunt Jane, Aunt Lucy, Father and occasionally my step-mother went with us. We carried huge baskets of food and began eating almost as soon as we started, in spite of a recent substantial breakfast. We ate and sang all the way out but were neither so hungry nor so noisy on the return trip. The fifteen miles were decidedly longer coming back than going out. We sang a queer lot of things: "Dixie," "Lorena," "Old Cabin Home" and "Listen to the Mocking Bird," where Ned shone brightly in his harp accompaniment. Also an original parody on "Swanee River," all of which I have forgotten except the refrain:

"All the world is bright and cheery  
Every road we seek;  
O family! Let us all be merry—  
Going out to Panther Creek."

But our greatest favorite was a rollicking plantation hoe-down called "Sally Am De Gal for Me." On this we always put in our best efforts.

Arrived at the mill we watched, in speechless attention, the big saw raspingly cutting its way into the logs and the whole process thrilled us. We played in and around the great sawdust pile and at the edge of the gray creek. It was full of water moccasins for which we had great respect and of minks which we watched in breathless silence when we sighted one. We had permission to use a small boat used by the loggers and we'd take turn about poling or rowing whenever we could find a stretch of water free from logs. Those days at Panther Creek were blissful days for all of us.

One day when Father was going out, he



took only the "small fry" with him—that is: Ned, Jimmy, Charlie, little Bev and me, and we started in for an uproarious frolic. The creek was full of logs for quite a distance in both directions and presented an unusual appearance to us. We went up the bank until we found a grapevine covered tree and, by catching the vines, swung out onto the logs. We were coming down, gleefully jumping from log to log when one of the hands called out to us sharply:—"Get off them logs this minute!" The boys "got" but I didn't. Instead I continued my flying leaps in high feather until I tried a peeled log, (one from which the bark had fallen away, leaving only a smooth surface). As soon as I struck it I knew I had made a terrible mistake. It was as slick as if it had been heavily greased and I shot down under it amid the terrified

shrieks of the watching boys. The creek was only about five feet deep, but of course over my head. The dangerous feature lay in the fact that the logs were so close together I couldn't come to the surface. The man who had called to us, seeing that I didn't heed him, had gone for Father who arrived just in time to see me disappear. He plunged into the water and several of the men jumped on the logs with poles and pushed them away so as to clear a space where I had gone down. Father soon found me and pulled me out and the men carried me to the sawyer's wife, the muddiest, dirtiest little drowned rat any one ever saw and so crest-fallen that my beautiful performance had come to such an ignoble finish. Of course everything I had on was filthy as well as soaked and Mrs. Marquis took off my clothes which she washed and

ironed, punctuating her work with remarks about wicked, headstrong little girls, who always came to a bad end. She dressed me in some clothes belonging to her fourteen-year-old son and I had to stay in the house all the rest of that lovely day because there were no shoes that would stay on my feet, while the boys ran riot. It was a fearful punishment for disobedience. Father's plight had been as bad as mine and he used some of Uncle Ed's things. But we were never taken out to Panther Creek again.

The only forms of entertainments we had besides a very rare party were the church socials and the annual Sunday School picnics and Christmas trees. We were considered large enough now to help with the Christmas decorations for the church. We strung popcorn, chinquapins and red haws to hang on

the tree, and twine about the evergreen festoons and wreaths on the walls. One of the church ladies always made a large star for the very top of the tree, of pasteboard covered with gilt paper, and sometimes there was a doll dressed as a Christmas angel. There were no glittering ornaments, no shimmering tricylice. Everything was home-made. The pastor and the superintendent of the Sunday School each made addresses that we thought would never end, and then some one dressed as Santa Claus distributed the simple gifts. Your name was called and you'd march down the aisle with a tickly thrill and maybe get a little fat black Bible—I always did—a Bible and a silver thimble and just as regularly I "lost" them on the way home. But I held on manfully to the mosquito net stocking filled with pink and



yellow candy fish and once in a great while we each got an orange. Sometimes there were candy eggs with fearful decorations. At one end a little piece of mica through which you peered at a colored picture on the inside end. We were always warned not to eat them but we always did, sooner or later, and usually sooner. They were made of a sort of rough, sweet plaster and I'd lick mine until all the color was gone and then I just had to eat it.

My poor stepmother tried so hard to teach me to sew and bring me up as a little girl should be reared. I remember an awful nine-patch quilt she attempted to have me put together, requiring that I make one block of nine pieces every Saturday morning. I am sure I could have done it in half an hour but I fussed and fumed while the boys ran in at intervals to see if I weren't ready to come out.

It was a weary job and I don't know how it ended but I reckon I wore her out and she gave it up. I don't think I ever pieced more than four blocks of nine and the seams were uneven and the stitches long and crooked.

Late one Saturday evening Uncle Henry, Mammy's husband, brought home a new cow and calf that Father had bought. So before breakfast next morning I started down to see them. I was dressed for Sunday School in a wool dress of the Royal Stewart plaid, and when I went into the stable yard the cow started for me. Her calf made her fractious. She didn't like my red dress and she meant to oust me. Uncle Henry called to me to run, he coming as fast as he could. I turned and started back but she caught me under the shoulders, on the tips of her horns, and tossed me over the fence into an adjoining



yard where I fell on the back of the neighbor's cow, which was lying down. She was so stunned and surprised by my advent that she didn't attempt to move and Uncle Henry promptly rescued me. I was terribly frightened but unhurt. The stout Scotch fabric hadn't torn under my weight and her horns had barely bruised my shoulders. I went on to Sunday School as usual, anxious to tell the boys of my adventure. Father later sold the cow. I never see that Stewart plaid without recalling my flight over the fence.

It was perhaps about this date that we had the first public school in our town — free school we called it—and I remember the chorus of a song that was much sung:

"Come along, come along,  
Make no delay.  
Come from every nation,  
Come from every way.

Bring your slates and books along,  
And don't you be a fool,  
For Uncle Sam is rich enough  
To send us all to school."

My teacher was a pretty young woman, well born and well reared, and well informed but distinctly untidy. In fact, truth compels me to say, unwashed. When Christmas came each child was asked to contribute to the purchase of a present for Miss Z——. I gave my quarter to the older pupils who were to select the present and thought no more about it. One day my father questioned me as to what we had given her.

"We gave her a blue tin wash bowl and pitcher with pink flowers painted on them, a soap dish and a cake of soap."

To my great astonishment he fairly shouted with laughter not once but many times. I

don't know how such a gift came to be selected but Miss Z—— was mortally offended and sent her resignation immediately to the school board. The whole town was stirred up over it and convulsed with laughter. It almost broke up our initial Free School. Finally the board persuaded Miss Z—— that it was the unmeaning act of her pupils and no veiled insult was intended. So when the Christmas vacation was over peace was restored. But there was an undercurrent of gossip to the effect that some parent had said unguardedly: "Better give her some soap and water," and the children had enlarged on the suggestion.

Through all the years that my cousins and I played together I think our favorite game was one we called "hosses," perfectly guiltless of an "r." We had stick horses of vari-

ous colors, shapes and sizes, each with its own name and owner and we played wonderful games of fairs and fox hunts and treasured our steeds through many years. I suppose it was the call of Kentucky blood that made us so partial to this pastime. Then we had another stock game of "robbers" that was a mixture of Robin Hood, Roderich Dhu, Kit Carson, Ali Baba and Maid Marian. We had to cultivate imagination. I held my own in all our sports except one. I could play ball and shinny, spin a top, walk on stilts and fly a kite but I met my Waterloo when it came to marbles. I couldn't play marbles—couldn't even play poorly—just couldn't play at all. I never got the knack of shooting and when the marble season came I lurked on the outskirts. I wasn't even an "also ran."

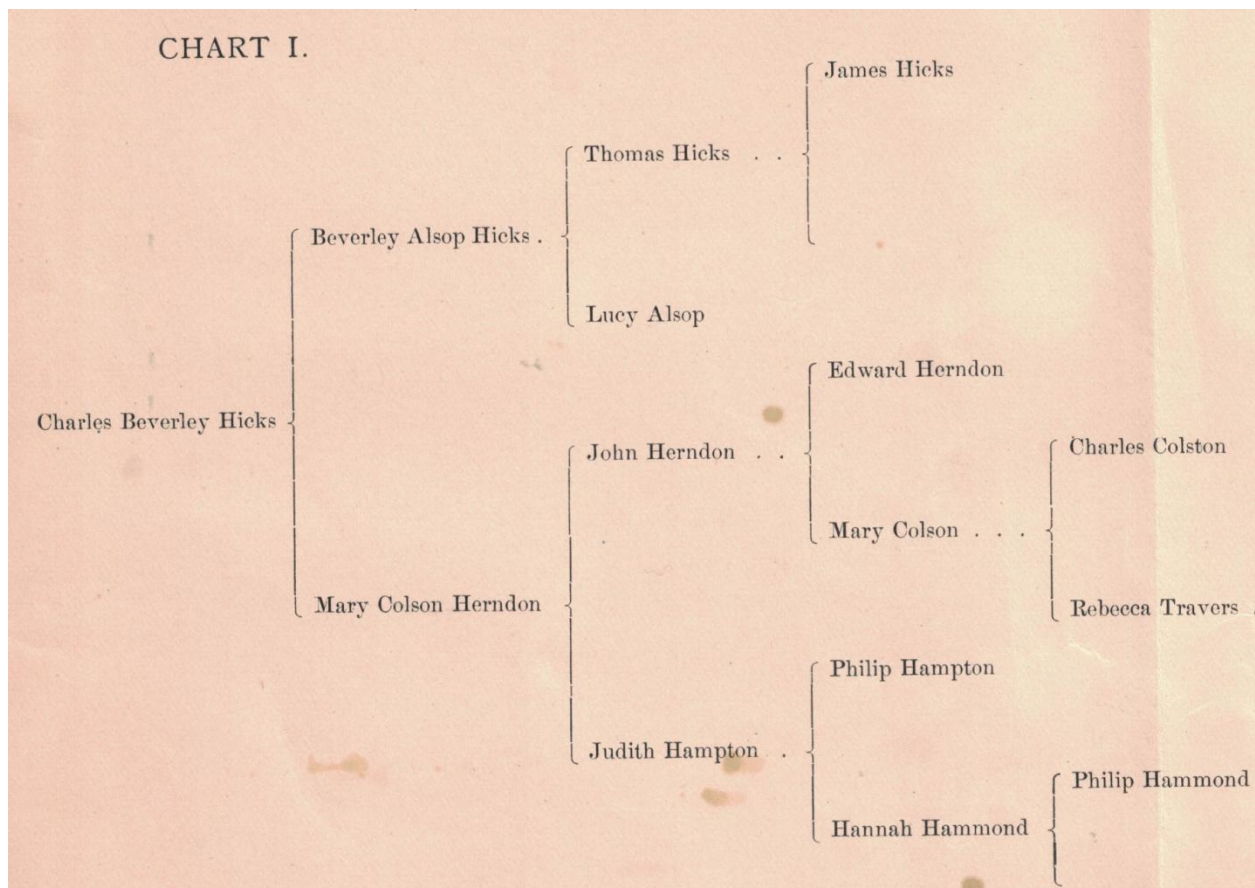
When I was nearly fourteen Father de-



cided that my tom-boy life just had to stop and the only way to convert me from a hoyden into a lady was to send me to a boarding-school. By this time John and Jimmy were dead. Bev, Dave and Rob were at work. Ned, Charlie, little Bev and their playmates were my playmates and I must admit that we were a wild set. Even my indulgent aunts agreed that something must be done. So for three years I went to a Presbyterian Female Seminary near Louisville and I suppose they made a lady of me. I have never been quite sure.

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Ella Hicks Johnson also published a 56-page family history book entitled, A Family Memorial (Louisville, KY: Geo. G. Peter Printing Co., 1894):





A

# FAMILY MEMORIAL,

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COMPILED BY

ELLA HICKS JOHNSON.

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LOUISVILLE, KY.:  
GEO. G. FETTER PRINTING CO.  
1894.

—“*Both justice and decency require that we should bestow on our forefathers an honorable remembrance.*—THUCYDIDES.”

In endeavoring to compile this memorial of my ancestors, I have labored under great disadvantages. Except in the case of the Flynt family there had been very little done in this direction. The records preserved were fragmentary and puzzling. The statements made by various members of the same family often conflicted, and many persons failed to reply to my letters requesting information on the subject. For twelve months I have spent my leisure hours attempting to collect reliable data. I have discarded all matter that does not seem to be supported by facts, and if, in spite of my care, I have made mistakes, I will be glad to correct anything proven to be inaccurate. I well understand that the result of my research leaves much to be desired, but I have done what I could with the available material.

ELLA HICKS JOHNSON.

LOUISVILLE, KY., September, 1894.

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## THE JAMES HICKS FAMILY OF SPOTTSYLVANIA COUNTY, VIRGINIA.

Coat of arms: An argent field bearing a sable tower; issuing from the top thereof four azure battle-axes, two to the dexter, two to the sinister. Crest.—A lion's gamb issuing, parted per chevron, orange and gules.

I regret that I have not succeeded in tracing the history of this coat of arms with sufficient certainty to make any positive assertions concerning it.

The arms of the Hicks family of Luxillian in Cornwall resemble it somewhat, being a tower triple towered on an argent field, between three battle-axes.

The single mullet on the chevron of the crest indicates the third son of the main house. Mr. Benjamin Hicks, the New York genealogist, believes the arms to belong to an Irish barony now extinct.

I have as yet found no record of the date of the coming of this family to America. In Bishop Meade's "Old Churches and Families of Virginia" Hicks occurs among "the names of some of the old and leading families of Eastern Virginia in colonial times and immediately succeeding the Revolution."

1. James Hicks, of Irish parentage, was in 1777 corporal in the Revolutionary War, under Alexander Spotswood, Co. No. 5. Virginia. (See Saffell.)

2. Thomas Hicks, son of James, born in Spottsylvania county, Virginia. In 1793 married Lucy Alsop of Spottsylvania county, Virginia.

Their children were:

	BORN.	MARRIED.	DIED.
Beverly Alsop . . .	1794	Mary Herndon, 1816	Owensboro, Ky., 1870.
Thomas S. . . . .	1796	Ann Bradford, 1819	Spottsylvania, Va., '70
Benjamin A. . . .	1798	Sarah Sale, 1835	Richmond, Va.
Rebekah A. . . . .	1799	William Sale,	Spottsylvania, Va.
Samuel . . . . .	1801	Mariah Pollard, 1828	Spottsylvania, Va.
William Thornton	1802		Spottsylvania, Va.
Lucy A. . . . .	1804	James Minor, 1837	Spottsylvania, Va.
Jane Casey . . . .	1806	William Crutchfield,	Spottsylvania, Va.
Eleanor . . . . .	1808	William Crutchfield,	Spottsylvania, 1811.
Ann . . . . .	1811		Tennessee.
Kitty Ann . . . .	1812	Benjamin Hicks,	Spottsylvania, Va.
Hugh Addison . . .	1814	Emily Utley,	Fredericksburgh, Va.
Robert Malory . .	1816		Spottsylvania, Va.

3. Beverley Alsop Hicks, son of Thomas Hicks and Lucy Alsop, married Mary Colson Herndon in Clark county, Kentucky, in 1816.

Their children were:

	BORN.	MARRIED.	DIED.
Mary Eliza . . . {	Fayette Co., Ky., 1817	Reuben Herndon	Lexington, Ky., 1863
Martha Blanton . .	" " 1820	Lunsford Chiles	" " " "
Edward Herndon . .	" " 1822	William Ellis	Fayette Co., Ky., 1842
Alexander Campbell	" " 1824	Lizzie Stowers	Fayette, Miss., 1885
Ellen Colson . . .	" " 1827	Martha Ewing	Fayette Co., Ky., 1892
Jane Herndon . . .	" " 1829	William Ellis	Louisville, Ky., 1852
Lucy Isabel . . .	" " 1832	David Todd	" " " "
Charles Beverley . {	" " 1835	Edward Carter	Louisville, Ky., 1893
Evalina Augusta	" " 1839	Mary Flynt	" " " "
		Annie Mathis	" " " "
		Edward Erwin	Lexington, Ky., 1864

Beverley Alsop Hicks was born in Spottsylvania county, Virginia, in 1794. Before he was twenty he served as private secretary to Major Stapleton Crutchfield of Virginia in the war of 1812. The bottle and case in which he carried ink for writing dispatches is owned by his grand-daughter, Lucy Anna Carter of Owensboro, Kentucky. He came to Kentucky in 1815 and lived for a time in Scott county. He afterward bought a large farm in Fayette county, about four miles from Lexington and established a mixed school called "La Fayette Seminary," which he taught for about twenty years. He was an unusually fine linguist and spoke German, French and Spanish beside being thoroughly familiar with Latin, Greek and Hebrew.

He was a prominent man in politics and a warm personal friend of Henry Clay. His youngest daughter married Mr. Clay's grandson. He was also a friend to Rev. Alexander Campbell, and Mr. Campbell always stayed at his house when he visited Lexington.

His hospitality was unbounded, and a liberal fortune was spent in entertaining. Families of six or seven frequently spent the summer at his home, and during the cholera scourge of 1832, so many persons took refuge under his roof that pallets were made in the parlor and hall, while others slept under the trees in the yard.



He wrote his neighbor's wills, cupped and bled them and extracted their teeth; of course without compensation.

He owned fifty negroes, and when they were freed his affairs were so crippled that he was obliged to give up the home place and go to Owensboro, Kentucky, where he died in 1870.

4. Charles Beverley Hicks, son of Beverley Hicks and Mary Herndon, married 1st, Mary Flynt of Fayette county, Kentucky, 1855. 2d, Annie Mathis, Owensboro, Kentucky, 1869.

Mary Flynt's child was:

	BORN.	MARRIED.	DIED.
Ella . .	Owensboro, Ky., 1861.	James Johnson, 1883.	

Annie Mathis children were:

	BORN.	MARRIED.	DIED.
Charles Beverley . .	Owensboro, Ky., 1870		
Annie Evalina . . .	" 1872		
William Edward . .	" 1874		
Robert Ernest . . .	" 1876		
Eula Herndon . . . .	" 1881		

5. Ella Hicks, daughter of Charles Beverley Hicks and Mary Dudley Flynt, married James Moreland Johnson, Owensboro, Kentucky, 1883.

Their child was Martha Moreland, born in Louisville, Kentucky, 1885.