

Courtin' Back Then

By Missy Cox Jones

Our mother, Minnie Steward Cox, loved to laugh and tell us stories. We asked for them time and time again, and never tired of hearing them.

One thing she told us, and she laughed and laughed. She said her family went to church a lot, it didn't matter what denomination the church was, they went. She said one time she got home from church and told her family "that she had seen the man she was going to marry." These are her exact words. Of course all of her family laughed and laughed at her. They never believed that she was really going to marry this boy that she saw at church. But, she did.

Mama said she had other beaux, but after seeing our Daddy, she didn't want to date any of them. She was pretty, with dark hair. When she and Daddy married, she weighed about 98 pounds. We have a picture that was made before they married. It was originally made to fit into a locket, but we have had it enlarged.

We also have a picture of our Daddy, taken about the same time, before 1912. He was very good looking. This was made from a miniature picture, made to be put into a girl's locket. We have pictures of Daddy and his brothers and his sister, Renier. And, a picture of the barn at Grandpa Cox's place. There is a wide center aisle, where the boys could bring their buggies in out of the weather. Daddy always had a pretty horse to pull his buggy.

She talked about what a good time all of the young people had. There was always church, and Sunday school. There was a Freewill Baptist church and a Methodist Church at Creamer, and Mama and her family lived very near the Creamer community. Daddy and his family lived several miles east towards Gustine. Mama and her sisters, Fannie and Myrtle, all played the organ and piano at church. Also, the girls would all help lead singing during Sunday Morning services at church.

Churches would have all day singings and dinner on the grounds. All of the young men would come in their buggies, and the girls got to meet them. Mama and her family would go to neighboring churches, for instance, to Board Church, between Comanche and Gustine. This is before she and Daddy married in 1912. There is a large old tabernacle at that church. It has had new roofs but the bones are still intact. Mama said her mother would take quilts and lay down behind their bench for the younger girls to sleep on if they were staying a long time at the meeting. And, meetings might last 14 days. All of the brothers were farming, and they would come in, eat supper, take a bath, put on their white starched shirts and their suits and all go to church those 14 nights.

Creamer had a depot for the Cottonbelt Railroad for the train that came through. Mama said that on Sunday afternoons, the boys would come by in their buggies and pick up their girlfriends and take them down to the depot to see the train come in. Mama said one time that Daddy was going to open the picket fence gate for them to go into the depot

yard and the depot man said, "Mr. Will, why don't you just pick her up and "sot" her over. We loved that story.

Mama talked about parties for the young people. Her family wouldn't let her dance, they considered that the work of the devil, but boys and girls still found time to be together. For instance, they might go to Comanche to picnics. Now, the early day Comanche newspapers had write-ups about these picnics. Mama said that Daddy would come in his buggy to take her to Comanche. She said there might be speeches, for instance, the Old Settlers Reunions, that there might be a carnival there with rides, also that there was ice cold lemonade. For the first days of the picnic, the lemonade was a nickel a glass, but on the last day, it was free, you could drink all you wanted.

Mama told about her dresses when they went to the picnics. One time, she wore a pretty cream colored cotton (nice material) that her mother had made for her. It had a high neck with a yoke made out of pretty lace. She said she wore a big pretty picture hat, and carried a parasol (an umbrella), but her neck and shoulders still blistered thru the lace, and her mother put sweet cream on her neck and shoulders for the sunburn.

Mama told about Daddy taking her to Comanche. She said one time that Daddy took her to a hotel for lunch (dinner). It was near the depot in Comanche. She had never eaten out like that before, and she didn't know whether to take off her hat at the dinner table. She looked around and saw that none of the other ladies had taken their hats off, so she didn't. She said they would have "candy pullings". Now, I have kind of researched this, and this is candy like taffy, and everyone buttered their hands and pulled this taffy until it was thin, and then, of course, they would eat candy.

Also, she mentioned something called "snap". I don't remember much more about this game, but she said it was a lot of fun. Also, they played "walking games". I can't remember too much that she said about this, but they had a game and the girl and her partner got to walk around the house. Hey, this is at night and they are in the dark.

Daddy bought Mama a wide gold bracelet before they married. You can see it in the picture they had made about 1916. They married in 1912, and their son, my brother Wilburn, was born August 2, 1915. They are dressed up in the picture, Daddy is seated and holding Wilburn and Mama is standing by him. She has on a pretty dress, and she had curled her long hair with a curling iron. No, she didn't plug it into the electricity. This had metal prongs, and she held these over a kerosene lamp to get them hot. She said if the curling iron was too hot, it would burn your hair bad.

Also, Daddy bought pretty cards to send to our Mama. Geneva (my sister) said when she was a little girl, that Mama would show them to her. Geneva said they were very pretty, kind of like Victorian looking. Just imagine this 6 foot 2 inch man going into a store and buying pretty cards to send to his girl.

Mama said before she and Daddy married, that her family was living at the Fowler place. This is just to the right off of highway 36, and near to where the Creamer community and

the Creamer Church were located. She would go to the mailbox to see if there was a letter from Daddy. Mr. Barnes from Comanche was the mail carrier, and he was driving a pretty horse to a buggy. Mr. Barnes would say to her. "Miss Minnie, you have a letter from Mr. Will today".

Later, after I was born in 1930, we lived on our Grandfather Cox's place, east of Creamer. Mr. Barnes was our mail carrier, but this time he was driving a car. We would meet him to buy three cent stamps, penny postcards, stamped envelopes and also money orders. We would have the order made out for Sears Roebuck or maybe Montgomery Wards. He would write out the money order for this, and we would buy a stamped envelope and mail it off.

One more thing, one time when I was just a little girl, someone was talking about a young couple who was on a date, and had a flat tire and were late getting home. Daddy looked over at Mama, and said, something like: "Hey, you can do the same thing with a horse and buggy." And they both laughed and laughed. How I wish I had asked them what they were laughing at.