

When Maxine and I Were Small Girls

By Missy Jones

I was born in 1930, and my sister Maxine was born in 1935, so we grew up fairly close together, and experienced the same things and we usually remember the same things from our childhood.

We were taught to love and respect our Daddy, and I remember so well when Mama would tell us, "Now girls, I am going to bake a cake for dinner and don't tell your Daddy. I want it to be a surprise." And we said "Oh no, Mama, we won't tell him." I guess you know what happened then, he would be plowing in the fields, and as soon as we saw him coming in for dinner, we ran as fast as we could and told him, "Guess what, Daddy. Mama is baking a cake for dinner." I am sure that they both knew we would tell, and this was something they enjoyed.

My mother could make the best plain cakes, and they tasted nothing like a yellow cake you make today, either scratch or from a cake mix. Of course, she used good lard, and this cake was just a little bit sweet. Sometimes she would make muffins for us, but it was usually a three layer cake. Now, my Daddy liked a cake that had "fallen", and Mama would make two layers and to the last cake batter for the last pan she would add extra sugar to it. When she baked it, it would fall in the middle. Daddy liked that. That good cake served warm with homemade butter was so good.

My Daddy was a good farmer. Sometimes he would plow up a cottontail rabbit's nest. There would be the rabbit babies, and he very carefully brought them to the house for Maxine and I. We would put them in a shoebox, in a nest of cotton, and tried to give them milk out of a doll bottle. They never lived, but we really worked hard at that.

One time, Daddy plowed up a mole. Now, Maxine and I had seen the mole trails out in the gardens and fields, but we had never seen one. The mole was dead and Daddy skinned it and put the skin on the side of the barn to dry, just like you would do with a larger animal. When it was dried, he gave it to us. It was so pretty, the softest fur you had ever seen, and was a beautiful dark gray color. We played like it was a powder puff.

My dear cousin, William Vernon Cox whose parents were Joe and Malinda Barker Cox, lived near my parents in West Texas before I was born. Vernon was born in 1920. They lived about 4 miles from my family, and Vernon said he would saddle his horse and come over to Uncle Will and Aunt Minnie's house as often as he could. He said she was so pretty, she always had her hair curled (it was long) and she curled it on a curling iron. He said she was always happy and laughing, and always had teacakes, or a cake or a cobbler pie when he got to the house. Vernon gave me information to help me picture my parents before I came along. He is now 92 years old, and lives in Michigan. I have shared a lot of family history with him, and we visit by telephone often. I do love Vernon. My parents were William Cornelius Cox and Minnie Steward Cox.