4/23

Dear Justin.

I am so happy to be sending this book of stories "Home". As I stated my son found this in a barn being renovated. He brought it home to me and knew It was something special. As I read the recolections of Mrs. Addie Hudgins Follett I though this needs to go home to her family & her home. I hope that this brings some information and details to anyone intrested. I am so glad I got to read her memories! Sincerly,

Tracy Gagnier + (son) DAVID Gagnier

Joe McKee
Ph. 233-6593

RETROSPECT

Mrs. Addie Hudgins Follett

I have reached the stage in my existence where I am stranded on life's highway - with a chance to look around, forward, backward, or askance - it behooves me, having no cares or responsibilities to hamper me, and with the faculties the Good Lord has enabled me to retain, and, the family urging me to occupy some of my idle hours in retrospect, to try to make a complete chronology of the Hudgins history, including a biography of my life, combining timely events and surroundings with which I grew up and lived through.

The earliest history I heard my grandfather speak of: The Hudgins family were of Scotch-Irish descent and emigrated in the days when America was the greatest drawing card to entice ambitious young men to leave their homeland to seek their fortune and help build up a place for themselves in a new world.

Three Hudgins brothers with all their possessions embarked for the land of their dreams. They were closely related to the Lord C. Diggs family and the older brother was the fourth in line to inherit the title and the portion of the estate that was always handed down from one incumbent to the next in line. They even agreed that two of them was to change the spelling of their name. The last syllable was to be changed from "ens" to "ins" (or the other way around). Grandpa never knew which was the original right way, but he was descended from the Hudgins Clan.

They arrived in America before the American Revolution, and the "ins" Clan Chief fought in the important cause, and afterward settled in Virginia. He married, raised a family who in turn married, raised families, and scattered.

One of the descendants, John Hudgins, was a widower with several children. He was an elderly man when he met and married a Miss Longest. They had a little girl named Annie and were expecting another child when he died. The new baby was named John Longest Hudgins

MY REVERED GRANDFATHER

When he was quite small his mother married a Mr. James Callis. Grandpa always called him Mr. Callis. He had a misunderstanding with his step-father when he was seven years old. With his mother's permission, he went to the leading blacksmith and apprenticed himself to learn the trade. His mother stipulated that he was to be sent to school, extra of his work. Thus began

his career. First as an errand boy delivering finished work, holding horses to be shod, and being overworked as a rule. He ate and slept with the boss's family, but visited his mother often. There were some half brothers. I know of two, Henry and Gus Callis.

By the time Grandpa was eighteen years old he was a competent blacksmith and made some extra money shoeing horses and making and selling "Jews' harps" on his own time. All the book learning he got, he picked up from observing and listening. He never went to school a day in his life, but he could read and transact simple business deals.

A Mr. Maynor who had been to Texas, asked John if he would like to come to Galveston, with his shipment (by boat) of slaves, machinery and housekeeping goods. Being a good business man, he dickered for his own passage and tool shipment and a certain amount of money. Then he bought, begged or picked up everything he could get hold of to open a blacksmith shop in Texas. He said some of the slaves were seasick between Hampton Roads and Galveston, but he landed everything and everybody safely on arrival. Mr. Maynor met him, took charge of everything and paid him off.

John L. Hudgins drifted around looking the country over and finally landed in Velasco, where he decided to settle and stay. Some of the settlers had fine horses (some blooded race horses) that needed shoes. So from the first his business prospered. In time he had more work than he could handle alone; so he engaged an assistant, Jimmy Shannon, who later became his pardner.

The next thing of importance that happened to him, he was recruited into Jack Hays Texas Rangers, and under General Taylor fought in our Mexican war. He was in the so-called Battle of Monterrey, only, Grandpa always said the battle was over before they reached the town. So the beautiful city was not hurt. It was just before the battle that Jack Hays made his famous speech. He knew he couldn't control his men, as they did as they pleased anyway. So he rode among them and said, "This is it, boys. Now it is every man for himself, and may the Good Lord take care of us all". After that decisive battle, General Zack Taylor was asked his opinion of The Rangers. He had watched them fight and spree around in Monterrey. He said, "There is not a coward among them - nor a gentleman."

John L. Hudgins was sick for some time after the war with some sort of liver complaint. He said the doctor cured him by blistering him with Spanish flies plasters. He thought it was lucky there was an army of Spanish flies at the right time. After he

November 29, 1976

Holmes
Don

The attached booklet is one written by my great aunt, Mrs. Follett, or rather is one as told by her to others who wrote it down - and then, her son-in-law, A. A. Callihan, typed it. He admits to not being the world's best typist, so please overlook the mistakes.

Mrs. Follett is a sister of my grandmother, Mrs. Amelia Hudgins Meredith. My aunt lives with her daughter and son-in-law at Oyster Creek. The telephone number is 233-1053. They do have a number of old - old ~~pixmk~~ pictures which you would probably be interested in and I'm sure they would enjoy having you come out to visit with them. Just give them a call.

Also - in case you need other old pictures or information, you might want to call upon my aunt, Mrs. Royalty, 233-1043, or my mother, Mrs. Wright, 233-2555.

The Royaltys and Callihans live on adjoining property located on bend of river at second dam across Oyster Creek going toward Angleton from Freeport.

Sorry, I have been dragging my feet in helping you get data together for your research and hope this may be of some help. The Hudgins family is rich in history and Brazoria County tales. My great grandfather was quite an old southern gentleman and my little old aunt is full of these interesting stories.

I believe my aunt, Mrs. Royalty, has much of the history of our side of the family so perhaps she can help you much too.....

Let me know when this presentation is to be made, I surely would like to hear you.

Margaret Monte
of. ph. 238-2671
Hm. ph. 233-2555

1860 census has John L & Caroline Hudgins, children 1-9 yrs at Quintana
1850 census has John Hudgins, Caroline Family 87

recovered he was walking to church one day and noticed a tall, graceful, strange lady ahead of him. At the church he met her, Miss Caroline Grissette. Planning was being done for who was to sit up that night with a sick lady. Miss Grissette offered to sit the first part of the night; so did John L. He walked her home that night. He found that she was making her living as a seamstress, and could make shirts. So right away he ordered twelve white linen shirts. The first six he paid for but the rest were not made until after they were married. He always bragged about beating the lady out of his sewing bill. He built a home in Quintana where they lived.

C A N A L

I have just read a history of Brazoria County, which contained some of Abner Strobel's stories of the old plantation owners and where they settled, and how they managed. They all had slaves to work the rich lands, so good crops were made; mostly cotton and cane. The problem was getting the stuff to market. It either had to be hauled on wagons with oxen, mules, or horses, or be shipped on sailboats to Galveston. Many shipments were lost at sea. Often the boats had to wait in for the weather to change. The wagon trains were often days or weeks making the trip. No bridges over swollen streams, a few ferries, and inadequate fords which were sometimes hard to locate, all resulting in lots of produce being lost.

Safer transportation had to be found. Steamboats were the answer. But top-heavy steamboats could not travel the rough Gulf route. So a group of engineers was employed to look into devisement of a better procedure. They followed Oyster Creek many bends to south, or head, where its overflow waters emptied into the Gulf of Mexico. Also, they studied East Union Bayou, that united with the Brazos River. Their surveys showed two short stretches of mainland that separated West Bay and the Brazos River. That route looked most feasible. A local firm in Galveston obtained financial backing, bought a second-hand dredgeboat in June, 1851. Work started on the "Big Project". On June, 17 John L. Hudgins was called to repair and work over the old engine. He began, but three days later was called home to welcome his first-born child, my Dad, John James Hudgins.

From then on J. L. was employed steady to keep everything in running condition. He was the type that watched the work closely, and when he saw a better way to accomplish something, he naturally (for him) began giving orders. So, long before the canal was finished he was in complete charge of the dredging, except for the bookkeeping.

Mrs. Ellen Shannon (nee Ellen Wilcox) told me told me that the biggest event of her girlhood days was a county-wide picnic on the day the last shovel of dirt was lifted and the waters of the Bay and River united. Such a noise she never heard before. The dredge tooted a long continued toot, men blew their horns and fired their guns, dogs barked, and even those Southern Ladies beat tinpans, rang bells and shouted. Thus, the Big Day - THE WEDDING OF THE BRAZOS RIVER AND WEST BAY - was celebrated.

The canal cost a lot of money. Its financing problem was solved by charging toll to the boats that used it. The fee was according to the boat's tonnage. Sailboats went by the Gulf route when the water was calm, to save paying toll.

The Canal Company had to build a bridge over the canal at Velasco, as it cut through the main traveled road to Velasco and Quintana. J.L. Hudgins built a house by the bridge and moved his family there and collected the tolls. He always said his house was another "House by the side of the road", only doubly so, since travelers made it a point to reach the bridge by dinner time, or about dark to spend the night; and boats often did the same, or waited for more favorable wind or tide. I wish I could paint a good word picture of the bridge. It had a central, concrete support big enough to lay a circular steel track over it. The bridge had a number of small trolley wheels, and when the bridge was pushed open the wheels traveled around the track until the bridge was lined up with the canal bank. It closed the same way for road traffic.

J.L. Hudgins was always looking for opportunities to earn money and to help his neighbors. So he managed to get a contract to furnish firewood for the steamboats. He hired men to cut driftwood on the beach, and had ox wagons to haul it over to the canal, where he corded it up and sold it. He also built a house on the canal bank and stocked it for a store - with one big room for a warehouse where people stored freight for the steamboats, and stores had their wares unloaded there instead of up the river.

After the Civil War school money was scarce, and good teachers scarcer. So, J.L. Hudgins, seeing his four sons growing up much as he had, put an ad in a northern paper, asking for a good teacher with "Texas fever" to answer. In that way he heard from an old university teacher who accepted his offer of $500.00 a year in money, his room, board, and laundry, with the privilege of teaching others. A school room was partitioned off from the store.

Mr. Lon Shannon came to the school and some of the Cannon boys too, I think. That was where Papa, Uncle Bill and Uncle Charley got most of their education. Uncle Sam was younger, times were changing, and he liked the out-of-doors with cattle, horses and boats. So with enough education to suit him, he quit school early.

Grandpa taught Papa his own trade, blacksmith work. Mr. Seaburn who owned and operated a shipyard in Quintana, taught him carpentering - including cabinet making and shipbuilding. Uncle Bill operated the store until grandpa closed it, then accepted work in other stores.

Uncle Charley studied law and worked on newspapers. He moved to Brazoria, the County Seat, opened a law office, became a co-editor of a weekly newspaper with Oscar Kirkland (Aunt Ruby Stratton's brother). He had always been a skinny guy, not too strong, but not exactly an invalid. He developed a cough that he couldn't seem to recover from. Dr. Ezell, who had just returned from visiting his brother in the foothills of Alabama, advised him to go to a coal mining district - do as little actual work as possible, just idling his time away for at least a year. He did that, going to Winston County, Alabama. He settled in the small town of Double Springs, did a little law business, wrote articles for papers and helped an editor friend write his edittorials. For a time he did not improve, and feeling he'd die anyway, offered to go into the Bad Lands to search for a Double Springs boy who had gotten into some trouble, left home and became an outlaw. The Sheriff had gone after him with a posse, got some horses killed (but no men hurt), then the matter had been dropped. Uncle Charley investigated the case and found evidence to exonerate the boy - hence his offer to go after him.

Some of his friends went with him as far as a buggy could go. He walked on with his camp outfit, camping out and fishing wherever the notion struck him. He weakened and became very ill. When a high fever left him, he found someone there nursing and caring for him. It turned out to be Howard, the outlaw boy. They became fast friends, and in due time made it back to Double Springs. Howard's exoneration was accepted by his home town where he became a politician ultimately being elected to the State Senate. He was instrumental in getting a highway in Alabama named C.D. Hudgins Highway in honor of "the best friend a man ever had".

C.D. Hudgins came back to Texas just after the 1909 storm. Grandpa was living then, but he could hardly realize that the gray haired man was his son. He kept saying, "The man that came back is not the boy who went away".

C.D. stayed around the home area only a year or two. He then moved to Oklahoma where he died. His body rests in a hallowed spot on Oyster Creek by the side of his mother. At the time of his death he was gathering material to write a series of historical stories of Brazoria County. He told me he was going to use uncle Bill rather roughly in one. In one story an Irishman known to everyone, who, whenever he had a few drinks aboard, would say he was celebrating St. Patrick's Day. C.D.'s papers were all lost. (More about him later on in these pages).

TURN BACKWARD

Before leaving Grandpa's early struggles I must not omit his California trip. While living in Quintana and seeing so many of his neighbors excitedly rushing off to California during and after the '49 gold rush, he finally got the fever too. He planned not to prospect for gold himself, nor work in the mines, but to stick to his own field of work, blacksmithing. So, packing up all necessary equipment, he set sail for California. He was months making the trip around Cape Horn, encountering bad, stormy weather, and being deathly sick much of the time. He promised himself no more sea trips - that his return home would be by land.

His shop prospered, with work too heavy for him; so he took on a pardner and kept open night and day, hiring extra helpers when needed. He was earning more money than most of the miners with most of the work being paid for with gold dust and nuggets. One nugget worth $40.00 he had made into a ring for Grandma.

During the height of this prospecting and prosperity, a letter came from Texas saying Grandma was having a nervous breakdown. Although his friends were standing by, he was needed at home. He sold out his holdings and hurried home. Grandma was pregnant. She didn't tell him that before he left home. That was mostly her trouble - being alone and not well. She made a good recovery.

The Canal Company had a toll collector in a shack by the bridge. He was not satisfactory. So Grandpa obtained the job and camped out in the shack while he built a nice home. He stayed there till death at 87 years of age. (He lost his home in the '75 storm, but stayed on and rebuilt.)

JOHN JAMES HUDGINS

The four sons of John Longest Hudgins spent most of their boyhood days at "the bridge", where they were tolerated, humored,

and petted by the Confederate soldiers. Papa (John James) was semi-official flag boy. Uncle Charley with his curly hair and silvery voice was often stood on a stump or barrel to orate the speeches they taught him. Uncle Sam always had something in his pocket or hand to trade, so he was dubbed "Trader". Thus three of the boys were "flag boy", "orator" and "trader". I don't know what Uncle Bill's specialty was, but he was one of the gang.

After the war and his school days were over, papa married at 21 years of age, Miss Susan Ella Graham. She was a pretty, popular southern belle. She had many admirers - one a ten year old boy who told me years later that he saved his money a long time planning to buy a gun to shoot John Hudgins. He recovered from his case of puppy love.

Papa built a small cabin on Oyster Creek near where it joined the canal. There on Jan. 18, 1875 my sister Amelia was born. In September the same year the still-talked-about '75 storm destroyed everything they had. When papa saw the danger, he nailed some doors to some heavy timbers, put his wife, baby, and mother-in-law on the raft, and by herculean effort managed, by wading, swimming, and pushing, to get the raft to Peter Nicholsen's home. Peter Nicholsen was a Methodist preacher. He had been holding a camp meeting on the "creek" and when the weather worsened, a lot of people moved to his house. Brother George Phair was there helping with the meeting. The refugees had plenty of food and coffee. So they stayed and ate, drank coffee, preached, prayed, sang, and visited until the storm was over, and the water subsided - three days, I have been told.

Uncle Bill who was working in a store at Quintana at the time of the storm, helped with the rescue and getting to safety everyone who needed help in that town. I heard him tell Teenie Bolin in later years not to "high-hat" him; he could tell about climbing out of a second-storey window of a bedroom with her in his arms, with her hugging him. (Ha, ha).

Grandpa, still at the bridge, had Uncle Charley, Uncle Sam, two teen age boys, and a half brother, Henry Callis who had recently come to see him from Virginia. He loaded them all into a large skiff, with what food they had, so that if the house started breaking up they could try to cross to the north side of the canal where there was a stout, well anchored post for boats to tie to. They did have to leave the house, and Grandpa said afterward his heart was in his mouth when he put Charley overboard with a rope to swim to the post. Henry wouldn't do it. He elected to stay in the boat to ward off drifting logs and debris to save the boat. Charley said he didn't swim much, as he could

walk on logs most of the way. They tied to the post and remained until the wind subsided. By then the house was a wreck, with all the furniture destroyed or missing. They took what they had to a two storied house which had survived on "the sand ridge". It was occupied by a German family named Hartown. Mrs. Hartown was five feet tall, and Mrs. Hudgins was five feet ten inches. When Mrs. Hartown was asked about some dry clothes for Grandma, she shook her head hopelessly. Grandpa assured her that whatever she could supply would be satisfactory. So Grandma got some dry clothes. As long as he or the boys lived, Grandpa and they often laughed about how "Ma" looked in Mrs. Hartown's clothes. Since they were used to seeing all ladies in long dresses, she looked comical to them - but "Ma" was safe and dry.

They went back to the bridge and began salvaging what they could. Henry Callis was ready to call it a day. As soon as he could get away he went back to Virginia, never to return. Grandpa built a new colonial type house where the old one had stood.

Papa rebuilt a cabin where he had been living, with a fireplace and dutch oven to do the cooking. The fireplace had a bar across the throat of the chimney (they called it a crane) with "hot hooks" to hang iron pots on for those old-time boiled dinners. I was born there May 26, 1876. Buster was born Nov. 6, 1878. Papa was still doing blacksmith work in the shop at Grandpa's place. He had a piledriver that was in demand a lot, and with his tool-chest and carpenter work he was always busy. They bought a cook-stove (wood burning) before the family grew to three children.

About that time Grandpa acquired his old settler's Headright, some land in Bexar County near a town called Lavaca. He offered this land to Papa and Uncle Charley if they would go out there and take over. They agreed, and moved with wagons drawn by oxen and horses. They had to ford some of the waterways and cross others on ferries, as none of them had bridges. It was a long, hard trip - over what is now considered a relatively short distance.

It was dry territory, with no irrigation systems having been developed. Efforts at farming were very discouraging. Papa tried it, but failed. Charley looked the situation over and decided to mortgage his part of the property for money to finance a venture that had been his ambition since his growing-up days - a newspaper. Lack of managerial experience did him in, and he failed.

As farming didn't pay, Papa bought a well-digging outfit and put down wells all over that part of the country. Thus, with some carpenter work, some blacksmith work (mostly shoeing horses) he managed to eke out a living. Charley gave up and went home. He was never strong enough for hard labor. He had already begun to study law, and had worked as a reporter on a Galveston paper, so

he wasn't inclined to toil and make a living by the "sweat of his brow". I don't know how long he stayed "out west" with us.

We stayed there until about 1879 or '80, when mother died. I have only a faint memory of her. Once she tied a bonnet on my head so that I could go down a turn-row and pick berries. She told me not to take that bonnet off or I'd get spanked. The other memory is of some lady lifting me up to get a last look at my mother as she lay in bed. I suppose she was dead at that time, but I didn't understand. I knew she had been in bed sick. She was always there when I went into her room - and she was still there. I never saw her again.

At that time Papa had a contract to put down several water wells. After the funeral he left Buster and I with Aunt Jane and Uncle Fred Paupa. A neighbor kindly offered to care for Amelia, as they had a girl her age. Papa went on about his work.

Now begins my first real memory of my grandfather. My being so young when we went west made him a total stranger to me when I saw him again. (Which came about in this manner):

Having some business which called him to Galveston, he told Grandma to have everything ready when he got back and he would "go out west and bring John's kids home". He arrived at Aunt Jane's house unexpectedly one morning and found two of us kids, Buster and I, there, "Amme", as Amelia was called, was somewhere else, and Papa was off somewhere at work. Grandpa told Aunt Jane to send for Amme and get the kids ready to be leaving the next day. He also suggested that she send her oldest boy, George Harold, to go find John. Maybe he could get there in time to see the children before they left. She put one son on a horse to go tell Papa that if he wanted to see his children, to get home at once. The other son went after Amme.

Everything worked out according to Grandpa's hopes. Papa came, and went along for the first part of our journey, which was on a stagecoach to Flatonia. I can remember watching him as he rode horseback alongside. Grandpa went in a store and bought a big bag of crackers and apples. Crackers were in bulk then and sold by the dozen or by the pound. Aunt Jane had fixed a lunch for us, too. We stayed at a hotel that night, but no one slept any on account of bedbugs. Papa made pallets for us children on the floor. I don't remember what the hotel looked like. Papa helped to get us loaded on the train for Galveston next day. We enjoyed the train and played happily as small children always do. Finally we went to sleep.

On arrival in Galveston, Grandpa at last had a problem he could not handle alone. He carried the sleeping grandchildren out one by one, laying them on benches at the depot. The porters brought out our trunks and other stuff. No cabs, no telephones, no one around whom he knew. Three young men alighting from the train,

seeing his worried looks, asked, "Old gentleman, do you need some help"? He said, "Yes, I've got to get these children to Mrs. Bucher's boarding house. I can't carry them all, and I can't leave any of them here". He told them that Mrs. Bucher was expecting him and the children. They each carried a child, and even helped with the baggage. He always referred to them as "The Three Good Samaritans who helped a wayfarer on his way". Mrs. Bucher relieved him of his cares, putting us to bed, where we slept well due to near exhaustion.

Next morning Grandpa went down to the wharf to see about transportation home. No steamboat was available, but he found Fred Reeves there with an empty boat. He had taken a load of produce to Galveston, but had nothing in sight for a return trip. He wanted to get back home and said he would take us along free of charge. (He lived at Rattlesnake Point, north of Grandpa's place). Grandpa bought a drayload of cabbage to make sauerkraut, and managed to get everything and everybody aboard the sloop for the last stage of the journey home.

We stopped at the Reeves's home, and Mrs. Reeves fixed us some dinner while we rested. I was tired, excited, lost, and hungry - but in no mood to eat, so just sat there. After the meal, when they ~~then~~ called us children to get on the boat, I ran back into the house, crawled up onto a bench, and grabbed a biscuit. Only about nine more miles, and we were home. I can easily imagine the feeling of relief Grandpa had when he turned us children over to Grandma and Aunt Venie, the colored cook.

I don't remember if I was homesick, or how long it took me to feel at home in the new environment. One of our great sources of childish pleasure was to watch for the boats to come, and to help - we thought - to open the bridge. I know that we soon felt that we had always been there. Amme and I were able to remember some of the people and things at our former home and talked about them for a time. Gradually the memories dimmed. Buster remembered none of it. Mother had taught us to call Buster "Bubber". We continued to call him Bubber until we started to school. The new family called him Buster, except Grandma called him "Little Charley", (his name being John Charles). All of mother's people called him Charley, too. When he went to school, the teachers called him Johnny.

People coming over the bridge were always a source of interest. Farmers taking produce to market always stopped, and Grandpa would look over their goods, often buying from them, and paying in cash. When they sold at the stores they usually had to take pay in merchandise.

At that time there were, at Quintana, three or four dry goods stores, several grocery stores, a shoe store, two saloons, some boarding houses and hotels, some summer homes, and, of course,

homes of the permanent residents. There was even a race track at one time, with horse racing. Our bridge road was the only highway, and people were continually going by; some to buy or sell necessities, some to transact business, some to visit, some to drink or gamble, and all could fish or swim in salt water.

Our (Amme, Buster, and I) young uncles, Charley and Sam, when opening oysters had great fun coaxing and teaching us to eat them raw. I was the first to get one down. I wasn't sure I could eat it, but something happened and I swallowed it. I said, "Oh, Uncle Charley, me did!, me did eat it!". He gave me another one which I chewed and swallowed. I couln't have said I liked them, but I was elated and proud - the family heroine - until Amme and Buster learned to eat them too.

Oysters grew all along the bottom of the canal. The family had two small flat boats and some oystering tongs. Almost daily, in season, someone went oystering. Fish and crabs were plentiful too. At that time there were no game laws and no limits on numbers of ducks, geese, deer, squirrel or any other wild game to be taken. Grandma had feather mattresses on every bed and many feather pillows and "bolsters", all made from wild game feathers. She never kept tame goose or chicken feathers.

There was an old negro, Zack, who lived on the place. He handled and drove the oxen and hauled wood. We children liked to ride on the ox-cart. It had wide wheels, was heavy and rough riding. It was a big adventure to ride it from the woodyard to the house, about one quarter of a mile.

Across the bridge, on the north side of the canal, was what was locally called "Mud Fort". The inhabitants had built it hastily during the Civil War when the Yankee blockade vessels were patrolling the Gulf of Mexico, trying to keep out shipments of flour, salt, ammunition, and other necessities.

Men with teams (oxen or horses), scrapers, plows and shovels dug a moat about eighteen or twenty feet wide all around the fort area. The material was thrown to the inside, raising the elevation, with part of it being piled higher, forming a breastwork on the side facing the canal. I don't think it was ever used during the war. It was on Grandpa's land. After we children came back there to live, the house was often too crowded for comfort when guests came. So Grandpa built a two-room house on the elevated part of the old fort. He furnished it with beds, tables, and seats to accommodate the extra men and boys when the house was too crowded. He called it "the storm house", since the '75 storm water did not cover the high part of the old fort. Uncle Charley kept his books there for studying, and practiced speaking when there alone. (He was a fine reader). Often, when we awoke mornings, there would be horses tied at the fort. Sometimes boatmen slept there, especially in the winter when they found it more comfortable with a fire and a warm bed.

We children played a lot at the fort, and when we discovered crawfish in the fort ditch we had fun catching them. One day Tom and Ellen Reeves were there crawfishing with us. We caught so many that Amme, who was always the leader with many brilliant ideas about things to do, decided to go over to Grandma's kitchen and get materials to make crawfish soup. I don't think we even washed the crawfish; just dumped them (whole I guess) into a pot with some cabbage and potatoes(also whole, I guess) and cooked them. I remember that we couldn't eat the stuff, but out of respect for Amme's leadership we all tried it - NO GOOD. Another time she went and got some molasses and flour and mixed them together, making a stiff dough. We ate some of it and put some on boards to dry in the sun. I don't know what finally became of it. I don't remember that it made any of us sick.

The first steamboat we saw go by was an exciting event. After having helped to open the bridge for its passage, we kids mounted watch stations on the open bridge to watch the boat go by. Just as she passed us, not ten feet away, she blasted the most "gosh-awful" tooting noise any of us had ever heard. We were scared wild, jumping down on Grandpa, trembling and clinging to him. He soothed us, saying that was the boat's method of telling that she would stop at the woodyard for boiler wood. We watched, and she did. After that the blasts didn't bother us a bit. That experience was with either the THOMAS or VICKSBURG. They were the two earliest steamboats I remember. Later the ALICE BLAIR, BRAZOS, WHITE WATER, and the HIAWATHA made the same runs.

Sometimes the passengers would smile and wave to us. I thought it would be grand to travel on a steamboat. Later, when I was eighteen, I had a chance to do that. Uncle Sam was taking a shipment of cow hides to Galveston on the Hiawatha, with no other passengers aboard. I found it dull. I found a book of Mark Twain that I read, and we had some good meals. But I was glad, indeed, when we landed, Uncle Sam sold his hides, and was ready to take me to Cousin Jennie Butts's home, where I was to stay and visit. I made the return trip home by train.

Back to the "Fort House": We didn't have any weather reports in those days. So Grandpa had to be weather-wise among other things. One time the wind was stormy-like, and the Gulf indicated it was going to come out of its normal bounds. Grandpa moved us all over to his "storm house" on the fort site. Grandma took plenty of clothing and food for us. Papa and Abe Moton, a negro, stayed at the house. I couldn't find my cat, so asked Abe to save it if he could, if the storm came. Also I was worried about a pretty new dress that Grandma wouldn't take over to the fort. She thought it might ~~it might~~ get hopelessly soiled. I asked Abe to save it too.

Fortunately, all we got out of that storm threat was gusty wind and high water. We slept that night, anyway I did. Maybe Grandpa didn't. When morning came there was still water everywhere. It was at least two or three feet deep between the fort and the bridge. We were not allowed to go home until Grandma could walk home dry-footed. Early in the morning Abe came over bearing "Giftes from the Gods" - a pan covered with a cloth containing hot, fried catfish. I was hungry and that was the best fish I ever ate. I told Abe so, and asked him to tell Grandma how he cooked it. I'm sure he never did, as he would never have wished to appear superior to her in any respect.

The "fort house" was well built and withstood the '86 storm well. The 1900 storm partially wrecked it. The 1909 storm totally destroyed it, leaving only a little of the framing standing.

Grandpa planted salt cedars all over the place for shade trees and hedges. He also planted them around the Fort area. I remember a Buckeye on the fort mound - Sweet Bay and a Sassafras.

A few years ago when the canal was widened on the north side, the dredge cut into and destroyed the "old fort". Now the spot is taken over by the Surfside Bridge Marina. Thus ends the "OLD MUD FORT" - UNWEPT, UNHONORED AND UNSUNG. THE MUD FORT'S DEMISE!

During the first year Amelia, Buster and I lived with Grandpa and Grandma at the bridge, Papa wrote that he had disposed of everything, finished all business and was coming home with his two horses, Nellie and Vista. Before we moved "west", Grandpa had given Nellie to Amme with the understanding that her first colt was to be Addie's (mine), the next Buster's and any subsequent colts were to be Amme's. John (Papa) could use the horses, but could never sell them. So Vista, the first colt, was mine. She never had any descendants, so Vista was all I ever had. Nellie's second colt, Snip, was Buster's. Buster rode Snip, a gelding, for years. Vista was our buggy horse. We drove her to school, about a mile distant. Amme's horses increased and as they grew up, Abe, who was an adept horse breaker, trained them for her. By the time she was married she owned several head of horses. I think her husband sold them when he needed money. Uncle Bill had been telling us John would bring us a new Mama, but he only brought the horses.

I wish I knew what year Papa came home. It was winter and extremely cold. The Colorado River was frozen over. Grandpa told it that John rode his horse across on the ice. But Papa said he walked and led the horses over. The blizzard must have lasted several days for the ice to have been that hard, and firm enough to bear so much weight.

Grandma had undertaken the beginning of our education. They got us some "Blue-backed Spelling Books", Webster's, and slates and pencils. She had certain periods with us every day, both with the books and slates. We learned to draw pot-hooks first, then loops, circles and curves. I don't remember learning to write the alphabet, but I guess I did. When we started to school - Amme 7, me 6, and Buster 5 - Amme and I were put in the second reader. When the teacher questioned Buster, he said, "Oh, I know about "Baker", "maker", and "racker" - and tore those pages out of the book.

Our first teacher was a man, Captain MacNeally. We called him "Cap. Mac.". He came to Velasco with an invalid son, hoping the Gulf breeze and change might help him toward improvement. Cap. was an old university teacher. His son came to school when he could. Cap. Mac. and the boy spent most of their leisure time at our house. There was always something going on that seemed to interest the son - boats going by and sometimes stopping, steamboats stopping for wood or freight, people stopping to pass the time of day, horse-breaking, branding, fishing, oystering, or just plain visiting. Also, folks at our house liked to play Cribbage, Euchre, seven-up, or checkers, and we had an eight-mallet croquet set. Grandpa was a great talker and knew much to talk about.

Cap. Mac. was the only man teacher I ever had, until I went to Summer Normal (a one-summer session conducted at the Surfside hotel) after I was grown. Our regular school terms were from four to six months duration. The pay was small and it was hard to get experienced teachers. My best-loved teacher taught two semesters, earning money to help send a brother through college. She was Miss Nettie Giesecke. She afterward married, but I don't know what her name was then.

Most of my classmates were older, having started to school a year or two before I did. They bragged about Mrs. Groce, a well liked teacher. She was the wife of Leonard Groce, a son of Jared Groce. Her maiden name was Blake. I saw her mother one time that I remember. Mrs. Groce taught the school two terms of four months each, at $25.00 per month. The once-rich family was enduring very hard times as a result of the Civil War, followed by the Carpet Bagger Rule. They lived about one third mile from us in a small house near the beach. They had a teenage son, Courtney, and three girls, Leala, Sarah, and Willeen. In age, I was a little older than Willeen. Sarah was near Amme's age, and Leala was almost a young lady. We played together a lot. I never thought at all about their living problem until one day when their Aunt Sarah Wharton and Grandma Blake were visiting them. Grandma Hudgins went over to visit them and Amme and I went along. The ladies sat in the living room and talked lady talk. I looked around and began to wonder, not how they lived, but how they slept. There were only four rooms: the reception room, the kitchen-dining room, and two bedrooms. There were Mr. and Mrs.

Groce, their four children, and the two visiting ladies. I innocently asked where everybody slept. No one answered. Grandma suddenly remembered that she had to hurry home for some important reason. She scolded me on the way home for being rude. Amme was very smug. She had behaved like a lady. To this day, I still can't imagine how they all slept.

The Groce house was rented to vacationers the summer of the '86 storm. That August blow wrecked the house, leaving only one room holding together enough to afford the renters a certain degree of protection. None of them were injured beyond scratches. The Groce family never rebuilt, or came back to the beach. I never saw them again.

R E E V E S

Cousin Mon, as we called Mrs. Reeves, was the daughter of one of Grandpa Hudgins's half brothers. Her parents died and she lived around with relatives where she could help out when needed. She was a discontented spinster who finally decided to do something about it. She wrote to her Uncle John (my Grandpa) about her troubles, so he sent her the money to come to Surfside. She lived at the bridge with us, helping Grandma to run the house. She made friends with everybody in the neighborhood, and finally married Fred Reeves, who was a widower with two small children. They lived at Rattle Snake Point which was several miles East of our place and on the canal. He was the toll collector from all boats going West through the canal. Some entering the canal from the East and passing his station, took routes up Oyster Creek before reaching the toll station at the bridge. Grandpa collected toll from all boats going East. He kept all the records and sent reports in to Headquarters in Galveston. Fred Reeves had a boat, officially named "Mary", but all of our folks called her "Mollie". He fished, oystered in season, seined, and sold on the market in Galveston. We kids learned to call Mrs. Reeves "Cousin Mon". We loved her. Her stepson, Tom, was a special pal of mine. We were the same age. Ellen was younger and she and I never got along together. So Amme had to take over entertaining her when they came to see us. Their only transportation was by boat, nine miles through the canal. They often went to Galveston on the boat, shopping.

Tom Reeves boarded with us and went to school at times when that arrangement was most convenient. Ellen stayed in Quintana to attend school. I guess she boarded. I was glad she didn't live with us. My feelings about her were justified, so far as I was concerned, the day she threw a prickley pear in my face. Then she and Amme would not get the thorns out. I went home and told about it, but no one would believe that Ellen would do such a

thing. But when they asked her about it, she said, "Yes, she got what was coming to her for tagging along with us".

When Ellen was about fourteen years old, she had a nervous breakdown. She was very pretty and married early in life. They had one child, and then later Ellen lost her mind completely. We lost track of her, the child, and her husband. Tom was drowned in the 1900 storm. Nothing was ever found of him or the boat he owned. Cousin Mon died at Rattle Snake Point and was buried there under a hackberry tree as she had requested. I was there. Papa made the coffin, Abe Addison dug the grave and Grandpa read the services. There were no songs or open prayers, and the service ended with a reverent, "God rest her soul, Amen". I think I was about fourteen years old then. Fred Reeves was still living then, and I don't remember where or when he died.

Shortly after Mrs. Reeves's funeral, a neighbor whose wife was on her deathbed, came by to ask one of us girls to go stay with her while he went for the doctor. Amme didn't want to go. She said, "Let Addie go. She is more used to people who die". So, I went. I gave her water, lifted her up and fanned her, and tried to do all I could for two or three hours until the husband came back. Later that day she died. I don't know what I would have done if she had died while I was alone with her. That was my first experience that close to a person's death.

Samuel L. Lyons 1850 census

I had been to several funerals, and one that left a lasting impression was that of a Capt. Lyons. I think he was a Confederate veteran. He owned a small house near our school. He cultivated a garden and gave the school children ripe tomatoes, onions, radish, or sometimes he had candy or lumps of sugar in his pocket. He was our special friend. When he died, he was buried under a salt cedar tree near his house. School let out for half a day for us to attend his funeral. We remembered him long afterward by the the name he called himself when talking to us children, "The Old Sea-LYON".

The nearest house to our school was occupied by Uncle Abram Evans, a venerable colored man and his family. His wife, Aunt "Calline", had belonged to Grandpa during slavery. He had bought her for a reduced price because she was crippled from a spell of blood poisoning. She couldn't do hard work, so Grandpa assigned her nursing duties and light housework. He named her Louisa - as Grandma's name was Caroline, and he wouldn't stand for a "nigger" in his house with the same name. So, our family called her Louisa. Everyone else called her "Calline".

Uncle Abram had some huge fig trees beside the house, where he sat a lot in a comfortable armchair in the shade. He also had a long grape arbor. At noon and recess we liked to talk to him. He

had a heavy beard and enjoyed likening himself to the people of Judah and Israel who "dwelt safely, every man under his vine and under his fig tree". Grandpa employed their children and grandchildren when he needed help, especially as wood-gatherers on the beach. I remember one noon while talking with Aunt "Calline, she was telling about something that "had me stumped to where I didn' know if to go dis way or dat way". Without thinking I said, "You were between the Devil and the deep blue sea". She shook her fist at me and said, "I'll tell yo' Pa and dem about you sayin' de Debbil about to git me". She did, too, and Papa called me to ask what I had said, and why. I told him in her presence and she said, "Yes, dems de very words she say!" Papa laughed and sent me away. I never knew how he made her understand my meaning.

Another time we found some plants we wanted to dig up and take home. I went over and asked Aunt "Calline" if I could borrow some sort of apparatus to --. She stopped me cold, "Y'all know I aint got no rapparatus - never did have no rapparatus. You go on away". The I told her I just wanted to borrow something to dig up a lily. She said, "Nex'time you want som'pin' I got, don' come here tellin' me I got rapparatuses, yo' hear!"

We loved Aunt "Calline", and if we tore a dress, lost an important button, or fell in a mudhole, we could go to her for repairs. She always seemed glad to help us. She was in demand as a midwife and was away from home a lot.

Grandma Cannon was one of the sweetest old ladies I ever knew. She lived about two blocks from our school. When we passed her on the way to Sunday School or church, she would let me walk along and talk with her. Her daughter Mrs. Bohan, with her three children lived with her mother. The oldest Bohan boy, Sheldon (Shell), was three days older than me. Jim Bohan was near Buster's age, and they were pals until Jim died in his early teens. Mrs. Bohan often did sewing for us, making dresses and accessories. She was good to us, but it was Grandma Cannon that I loved. When she died all the adults went to the funeral, but there wasn't room in the buggies for us kids. She was buried on Oyster Creek, where some of my folks are buried. She owned a home and property on the Creek. Most of it is still owned by Cannon descendants.

Some of the other families who had children in our school were the Ned Cannons, Schusters, Shannons, Moores, Hudnals, Simpsons, and Kirkers. Some coming from Quintana were the Seaburns, Olstrons, Dances, Brigance, and Mersikers. The girls sat on one side of the room, and the boys on the other. We played together at recess and noon. About half of us brought lunches from home, and sometimes we brought water also. I don't remember ever taking any other drinks. We had neighborhood parties where the girls brought cakes and the

boys brought lemonade and ice - when they could get the ice.

On Fridays, at school, we had programs where the students would recite poems they had learned, and parents who could, came to hear us. One time I wrote to Uncle Charley and asked him to write something special for me to say. He did, but told me not to use it if I was supposed to write it myself. He sent me his poem "My Native State". I still know every word of it. In later years my children recited it at school and other special occasions:

MY NATIVE STATE

By Charles Diggs Hudgins

Let other harps and other tongues
In raptured numbers swell,
In praise of some historic spot
Or fair secluded dell.

My own young voice I dare to raise,
Though all untrained and weak,
In honor of my native State;
'Tis of her charms I'll speak.

My native State!, oh, is there one
Who breathes this vital air,
Though he had belted all the world,
E'er saw a spot more fair?

A spot where nobler memories dwell,
Or sweeter hopes survive,
Or brighter prospects rise to greet
The patriot's anxious eyes?

Broad spread our plains in rolling green,
And clear our rivers flow
To meet at last the deep's embrace,
Where gentle breezes blow.

Where science marches grandly on,
Our schools increase each day,
The sound of hammer and of loom,
And all that commerce draws,
Are but the just creation
Of our wise and liberal laws.

And our young men, our hope and pride,

So stalwart, brave and grand;
Brave are they as our noble sires
Who won for us this fertile land;
As true as they, our lovely girls,
the fairest maids on earth,
But not more famed for beauty
Than for purity and worth.

Here many a gray haired matron dwells,
With plaintive voice and sweet;
With power sublime and Christian zeal,
Recall those wayward feet
That else might wander far afield
Amid the world's wild din,
Until in helplessness they sink
Into the mirey way of sin.

And, oh, what memories cluster here
Of deeds of daring done,
Of fields against tremendous odds
By desperate valor won.

The memory of those who fell,
Defending home and hearth,
Will dwell eternal in our hearts,
Reminders of their worth.

Into the nearing future
One can glance with prophet's eye,
And see as plain as one can see
Yon bright sphere in the sky,
That our soft clime and fertile fields
Will make us truly blest,
And Texas will bloom like a rose
Upon Columbia's breast.

So other harps and other tongues
In raptured tones may swell,
In praise of some historic spot,
Or fair secluded dell.
My own young voice I dare to raise,
Though all untrained and weak,
In honor of my native State;
In her praise I'll always speak.

PRAYER BY C.D. HUDGINS

Supreme, Almighty God,
Omniscient in thy will,

Let thy voice dictate to us,
And guide our footsteps still.

Thou knowest, oh God, our failings,
Thou knowest our waywardness.
Teach us, our Creator,
Thy bounties to confess.

Teach us to know Thy wisdom,
As at Thy shrine we kneel,
And, oh, let us this moment
Thy sweet forgiveness feel.

And as we near the river,
And cross its dark tide o'er,
Oh, let the angles greet us
On Heaven's shining shore.

And beside our Savior,
Throughout eternal day
Let us sing "Hallelujah"
Forever and for aye.

THE DYING RANGER

By C. D. Hudgins

Far out on the lonesome prairie,
Where the cold winds whistle by,
And the yellow grass of autumn,
In its wavy blankets lie,
I was called by a voice of mourning,
Borne on November's tide,
And I knelt with reverent sorrow
By a dying ranger's side.

He was a doughty hero,
Whose voice had oft arose
Above the roar of battle,
And the yells of savage foes.

Who now lay on his blanket,
At the closing of the day,
Watching the dying sunset,
While his young life ebbed away.

"How do you feel, Lieutenant?"
I asked the dying boy.
"Do you feel that the nearing future
Holds for you its realms of joy?"

His eyes turned full upon me,
His voice was soft and low:
"I have not done some things I ought,
My brother, this I know."

"Yea, I have been a wild one;
My will was e'er my creed.
But I've wronged no man of honor,
I've wronged no man by deed."

"And I have asked forgiveness
For every wrong committed,
And I have asked forgiveness
For duties I've ommitted."

"And I know that God has heard me,
For the promise he has given,
That he who puts his trust in Him
Shall find a home in Heaven."

He ceased - I sat beside him
Till the sun far in the west,
Stooped to kiss the lonesome prairie,
Then my hand he gently pressed.

"See, oh see, Christ Jesus
Leading the angel bands on high?
And he beckons me to join them
In their revels in the sky."

He raised his hand toward heaven,
And sat upright the while,
Then fell back on his blanket,
His face wreathed with a smile.

No doubt he'd had forgiveness
For every sin committed.
No doubt he'd find forgiveness
For duties he'd omitted.

We buried the Ranger on the plain,
And there he rests today.

But I know he is as happy
as if his body lay

Encased in a marble casket
Beneath the deep green wave,
Or on the crest of a mountain;
A grave is just a grave.

Yet oft in a chill November
When I hear the cold winds sigh,
A tear will start unbidden,
And fall from my burning eye.

For I see the spot unmarked
Where he lies beneath the sod,
Far from human habitation,
All alone, save for his God.

Yet those tears are idle,
'Tis ever vain to cry;
For the great, the good, the wise alike,
Must in that long trance lie.

And at the resurrection,
He will be as easily found,
As those beneath tall monuments,
In consecrated ground.

At times our teacher asked us to write compositions. These assignments might be letters to relatives, things about our school, about blooming wildflowers, or, maybe, a picnic. A particular subject was the same for all of us - sort of a competition. One time she asked us to write a love letter to an imaginary person. Being shy, I refused to do it. For punishment I was told to write a composition on Napoleon Bonaparte. I was familiar with the name but couldn't recall anything about him. I asked about him at home and no one could furnish the details I thought I needed. Someone did find an old book about the life of the Empress Josephine, and suggested if I would read it, I could probably find enough material for my composition. After reading that book I had anything but admiration for Napoleon Bonaparte. I was furious, remembering that some historian in writing of our beloved Robert E. Lee stated that as a strategist, he was second only to this Bonaparte.

Well, I got by with that assignment, but I'm not sure how. The others apparently handled their love letters satisfactorily.

I had another letter problem when I was eight or nine years old. It was in connection with a story about the jetties, and I can't get away from those tender years, down memory lane, without reviewing what I remember - and wrote - about that subject:

When Uncle Sam married Emmaline Pinkard, an orphan girl living with her sister, Mrs. William Waters, on Oyster Creek, we all went to the wedding. Grandpa built a five-room house near us for them to live in. We called it "The New House". When they came back from their honeymoon trip we had a big "in fair dinner" for them with a house full of the original wedding guests. "In fair dinners" are never held any more.

About that time a movement was tried to deepen the water on the bar at the mouth of the Brazos River by building up above water level, and out to deeper water, arms of stone, called jetties, on either side of the natural channel. The theory was that the channeled water would wash through the bar and move the material out to sea.

The base for the huge stones which were to form the jetties, was great amounts of saplings and brush cut from the river banks upstream and hauled by boat to the site. Grandpa obtained the contract to furnish the brush. He had a number of negroes cut much of the material from the dense woods bordering Oyster Creek. He had two boats to bring it out to the jetty site. How well I remember the boats -- the Queen and the Cleopatra! Papa operated one of them. I don't remember who handled the other one. They were built with roomy decks. Each carried two masts with three sails - jib, foresail, and mainsail.

The man who was in charge of the jetty work was Mr. Gus Wilkie. He was newly married and he and his wife became close friends of Uncle Sam and Aunt Emma. They visited back and forth often and had lots of fun doing things together. They fished, crabbed, swam, rode, shopped, made candy, cooked new dishes and ate many meals together.

Now returning to the aforementioned "letter problem": About that time there was a small weekly newspaper printed in Columbia. It was called The Old Cap - short for The Old Capital. They always carried one page of children's letters. One week our teacher told each of us to write a newsy letter to The Old Cap. I puzzled my brain for hours about what sort of news I could write to a newspaper. Finally I asked advice from members of the family. Someone suggested that I write about the jetties. I said, "Oh, that is not news. Everybody knows about the jetties". But they told me that people who lived in other places did not know all that I

knew about the jetties. So I wrote and rewrote until I was tired of the subject. But I stuck with it and told everything I knew about it, either from hearsay or personal observation. I remember that I finished my letter by saying, "They think all that is going to put more water in the Brazos River. But, of course, it won't, because the Brazos River is full of water now".

Well, my letter was chosen by the teacher to send to the paper, and none of the family knew about it until they saw it in the paper. They all kidded me about it, but were pleased by the way I handled such a big subject.

Uncle Sam lived in "The New House" only a short time. He moved out to a ranch on Oyster Creek, about two and one half miles from the home at the bridge. He engaged in the business of buying and selling livestock for himself and Grandpa. He was a good trader and did well in this venture.

Papa, at that time, was living in Quintana, working at the shipyard. He came home nearly every Sunday. In rough weather he stayed home with us.

Uncle Charley lived in Brazoria, the County Seat, and practiced law. He also helped edit a weekly paper called Investigator. He was assistant to Oscar Kirkland (Aunt Ruby Stratton's brother). He left his considerable collection of books, except those he needed to have with him, in the front room of the otherwise vacant "New House".

Well, that house wasn't completely vacant. After Uncle Sam left, Abe Addison, the negro man who worked for us, slept there. I referred to him earlier as Abe Moton. He was raised by his Uncle Jake Moton and was spoken of as "the Moton boy". But his real name was Addison. It seems like he always lived at our place.

Another event to be well remembered was the '86 storm. It probably was on a Sunday, for Papa was home that day. Some time in the afternoon a hungry tramp came along. He was fed and sent on his way, but Grandpa was suspicious of him. Since the weather was blustery and ugly anyway, he was tempted to ask Papa to stay the night as added security. But, he let Papa leave, rowing his skiff back to Quintana. By the time he reached the Brazos River, it was rising fast. He noticed that the water was out all around the Simpson's house. So Papa stopped there. Mr. Simpson was up the river in his boat, a sloop called "Hattie". Mrs. Simpson was home alone with a house full of small children. Papa stayed and helped Mrs. Simpson gather all the food she had in the house, together with some clothes, and using his skiff, took them over the canal to the empty Kramer house. They were out of the water and rode out the storm safely there. Their own house with everything in it was lost. Thus, Papa was able to save the Simpsons because he did not stay with us.

At home, that night, we went to bed at the usual time. All except Grandpa. He sat on the porch with his six-shooter at hand, worrying about that tramp. When he finally went to bed, he put the gun under his pillow, determined to fire on any intruder. Later he was awakened by the sound of someone in his room. He grabbed his gun and demanded to know who it was. Abe answered, "It's me, Mr. Hudgins. I swum over here. The "New House done gone". Grandpa saw that water was coming into our house, and huge logs from the beach were floating around in the yard. We were all gotten out of bed to watch the logs and keep them shoved away from the main house. However, an "ell" off the main structure, housing the kitchen, dining room, and pantry storeroom, as we called it, was lost. During the blow, Abe or Grandpa caught a barrel floating by that had corn meal in it. Later when we were hungry Grandma managed to cook some mush. Luckily, we regularly bought sugar and coffee in one hundred pound lots, and kept it stored in a closet in the house to keep the negro hands from stealing it. So, we had coffee, sugar, and meal.

The water went down in a few hours, but it left our yard full of logs. Wood and trash piled up in places as high as what was left of the picket fence, and snakes were slithering through it, making it dangerous to step outside.

The bridge had been blown into an open position, and couldn't be closed. Some sort of ferry was improvised as a temporary measure to accommodate those wishing to cross the canal. The importance of the bridge was brought home to everybody living at Surfside and Quintana, so all the men of the area got together to work out hasty relief. Our wagon and buggy were washed into the canal and were pulled out on the opposite side so everyone could use them to get to Velasco and other points inland for available supplies. Horses for this use were swum across the canal.

Papa got back to us as soon as he could. He hired all the negro men and boys he could find and set them to cleaning up the yard. Grandpa rounded up material and set men to work on the bridge.

We hunted around the yard and found some pots,pans, dishes, and some silverware. So, with a dutch oven and fireplace, we cooked and ate. We lost all of our chickens. Uncle Sam had some drown at his place on Oyster Creek, but was able to dress them immediately, and share with us. I don't remember what else we had to eat before food supplies could be brought in by boat.

Uncle Charley walked home from Brazoria the day after the storm to see if we were alright. He stayed to help out.

After they got the bridge working, and everything cleaned up around the place, work began on salvaging the dilapidated "New House". What was usable was moved over and joined onto the old house, and put to use as kitchen, dining room, pantry, and one bedroom. A little six-foot by twelve-foot porch was added. A new brick wood-stove was installed - the only kind Grandpa would buy. A brick flue was built - no stove-pipes for him, except a short elbow joint in the kitchen.

I learned to cook in that kitchen, instructed by Aunt Veenie, Aunt Judy, Aunt "Calline", and Aunt Feby - and sometimes Grandma, when she would be in charge if the cook had a "misery" somewhere and couldn't work.

Grandpa always had a room somewhere for the male negro help - in the barn loft, by the corn crib, and finally, a one room and porch for Abe, who was a sort of fixture on the place. For, of course, he was a heroic favorite after the '86 storm.

Years later after I was Married, Abe was at our house helping to brand calves. Also in on the activity were Uncle Bill Hudgins, Lon Shannon, George Schuster, Ray Cannon, and others. Abe stood in their midst, and after getting everyone's attention made this oration; "Ev'body knows Mr. Lon Follett's got the bes' wife in the world. Her Grandpa say I saved her life in the '86 storm. If I hadn't saved her life, then he sho' wouldn' have such a fine wife. So, I think I deserve a cow and calf for saving Miss Addie for him". Everybody cheered and clapped their hands, so Lon let Abe pick out his cow and calf. Abe had the know-how to get his way around the white folks, and the rascal could always maneuver around on the job so that the other hands did most of his part of the work too.

One time Uncle Sam needed a man who could handle cattle to go to Oklahoma with a trainload of livestock. He picked Abe to go and gave him instructions as to care of the stock, contacting the buyer, and making delivery to him. Abe got the cattle through okay and delivered them. But, before he could catch a train back home, the deputy sheriff arrested him, mistaking him for a lame, scar-faced rapist the law was looking for. Abe tried to tell who he was, why he was there, and wanted to wire back home for help. The only reason he walked lame was those run-over boots Mr. Lon Follett let him have to wear on the trip. He asked to be allowed to take off the boots, and walk or run to show he wasn't lame. His talking didn't help, but before they decided what steps to take with him, Abe said the "high" sheriff came along with a full description of the wanted man. He was six inches taller than Abe, heavier built, and had a scar on the opposite side of his face. So they turned Abe loose, but the sheriff advised him to leave town as soon as possible, before the wrong people made a worse mistake. He took that advice. But he never forgot the experience, nor volunteered to take charge of a shipment of cattle to anywhere. He married, lived in the "fort house" for a while, and had two children.

SO I LEAVE FAITHFUL ABE ADDISON.

Amme, Buster, and I never went anywhere in our growing-up years, except in the home neighborhood and to Quintana. It was a mile from home to where we crossed the river to Quintana. We went to

the stores and learned to buy necessities or just things that we wanted: material for our clothes, our shoes, hose; or candy, chewing gum, fruit when it was available, or at times, pink lemonade, or a milkshake. It was an adventure for us to go to Quintana with some jingling silver coins to spend.

With the grown folks we took longer trips - out to Oyster Creek to visit Uncle Sam, Mrs. Waters, or on out to the Way place which was a mile farther. We were happy in our little world.

One day Papa came home and told us to gather up all our best clothes, saying he was taking us to visit Aunt Sarah D'Arcy. We kids didn't know where she lived, but we were going in a buggy and knew it would be a long drive. I remember we stopped at Uncle Sam's. Papa asked about roads and bridges. Aunt Emma gave Papa some coffee, and gave us children some buttered bread and milk. When we left there and passed the Way and Cannon places, it was all new territory to us kids. We went by Lake Jackson (no town there then). I can remember a bridge that looked sort of shaky. Papa asked an old negro man if it was safe to cross. He managed a dubious look, shook his head, and said, "The little kids better walk, and, mebby so, Mr. John, you better go with 'em, and let me lead your horse and buggy over". The bridge probably was safe, but Jake saw a chance to get a little change as a tip. He did.

Aunt Sarah was one of my mother's six sisters. They had seven brothers, but I knew little of any of the family but Aunt Sarah. She was married to Joseph D'arcy and they lived on Bastrop Bayou at a site known to them and their neighbors as "D'Arcy Cove". This was only about twenty miles from the canal bridge, but we kids didn't know the world was that big. The homesite was in the edge of timber. Uncle Joseph had a two-story house, a sugar mill, a wood house, a big barn, hogs, sheep, cows, turkeys, chickens, and a peach orchard where we could see squirrels every day. We helped them with all the animals. One day we had a picnic. We had to cross Bastrop Bayou on a ferry at the George Creed place. Aunt Sarah pointed to a piece of land that jutted out into the bayou. She referred to it as "the peninsula", and said that she and her sister Jan were married there in a double wedding ceremony. There were many guests and festivities lasted for two days.

Uncle Joseph kissed everybody good-night and good-morning, and his kisses always tasted like his pipe. But I loved him. We stayed there a week. One thing special we did was to go up to Oyster Creek Station and watch the trains go by. MY FIRST TRAIN.

We went home by a different route - through Phair (Ranch Prairie), which wasn't nearly so far. I kept asking Papa if he thought Grandpa and grandma were alright. I worried about them

all the way home. When we were near enough home to see the bridge I felt better. Amme and Buster said afterward they never gave it a thought. Having been away so far and for so many days and nights, I was sure relieved when we drove across the bridge and I saw that the house, the pets, and everyone were alright. After that, Aunt Sarah and the girls came to see us, at least every summer, and at special times when Amme, Buster, or I had parts in school activities. I don't remember ever seeing Uncle Joseph after our week's visit there. When he died Papa went to help the family with final arrangements and settlements. It was probably in the fall of the year, because he brought back some pecans.

Aunt Sarah's remaining family was three daughters: Julia, who married George McKeen; Ella, who married Joe Bare; and Kate, who married Jim Callis. A step-son, Louis D'arcy was grown and on his own away from home.

It was about that time that Amme, Buster and I had a serious discussion about running away from home. I don't remember just what brought it up. Buster said we would have to hide out for a long time until they quit looking for us. I piped up with the suggestion that we go to Uncle Sam's. They said, "That's silly, he'd just bring us back home". There was a lady visiting Grandma, so when I had an opportunity I told her that whenever I ran away from home, I'd go live with her. She said, "Child, that would make a lot of trouble for me and I would just have to bring you home again". So, that was settled; we'd just wait until we were older and could find our way to Aunt Sarah's. I don't remember if that subject ever came up again. Do all children dream of some Utopia where it would be ideal to live?

I used to see the men come in dripping wet from being caught in a rain. I thought it would be fun to be out in a rain and get wet. Well, I had the chance one day. We were rowing a skiff in the canal and there was no handy place to land when it began to rain, so we were like drowned rats when we got home. I thought it was funny, but Grandma didn't. She gave us dry clothes, but said that we could not have any more clean clothes until Sunday, no matter who came or what happened, so we'd better stay clean. It was several days until Sunday. One of those latter days of the week, Grandpa needed to send a message to Papa who was working about a mile from home. Amme looked at her dress and said she couldn't go. The errand fell to my lot. When Papa saw me he accused me of running away, for he didn't think "Ma" would ever let me leave in clothes that dirty. I told him she knew how dirty I was and wouldn't let me change. He walked home with me and found I was right, that I was punished for being out in the rain and getting wet. Grandma didn't know until we belatedly explained that we were rowing and could not land until we reached a landing place. I was cured from wanting to be out in the rain. I was so ashamed of how everything happened.

In those days we had Sunday School in the schoolhouse, and once a month the Methodist preacher came and we had church. He lived in the parsonage at Phair. I suppose he qualified as a "Circuit Rider", as he preached in several communities. Some of the preachers who served that charge were: Phair (for whom that community was was named), Savage, and Wilcox.

We got our mail three times a week in Quintana. It was brought by a mail carrier from Columbia. Grandpa subscribed for the Galveston News, which came by the mail carrier. We also got the Texas Christian Advocate, the Boston Globe, the Ladies World, a mail order catalogue now and then, besides business, kinfolks and friend correspondence. So, we had some mail every time the carrier came. We children liked to go to the Post Office, as it was in a store, and we usually had a nickel for candy or chewing gum.

Other things made Quintana an interesting place. Sometimes we went to church there. We often visited friends, as we knew nearly all of the old-timers and some of the summer visitors. I can remember one bit of excitement when the Quintana Postmaster commited suicide. I don't remember why.

An elderly couple named Runyan ran a store in Quintana. They rented some spare rooms to people to whom they furnished meals also. Papa and one or two other men who worked in Quintana stayed there. Amme and I liked to go there. We could see Papa, buy stuff from the store and visit with Mr. and Mrs. Runyan. Mrs. Runyan asked Papa to let one of us girls live with her and help in the store and with the housework. Of course, Amme got to go. I don't remember how long she stayed, but she came home when school started.

During those early years when we were in the process of growing up, we learned many things without being conscious of learning. We just knew. One accomplishment was learning to ride horses. When quite small, we were riding every horse on the place. Our favorite was a small pony named Billie Bryan. Grandpa bought him from the Bryans and referred to him as "the Bryan horse". We children gave him the name of "Billie Bryan". He was a bay with black mane and tail. His mane was roached, meaning it was cut short.

When Buster was old enough and tough enough to ride for hours at a time, the men let him go to Turkey Point and stay with them at the camp house for the Fall and Spring round-ups. The camp was owned and operated by the Seaborn, Hudgins and Follett crowd. It was centrally located at Ranch Prairie for the convenience of the ranchers whose herds grazed the surrounding open range. They tried to manage their drives so that they could eat and sleep at the camp house. A good cock - usually a negro - was a must. I remember one, Jeff Evans, who served during many round-ups. Sometimes they had only two meals a day - a before sun-up breakfast

and an after-dark supper. Other cattlemen outfits called them the "the featherbed crowd", because they "pampered" themselves.

All Ranch Prairie settlers who had cattle rode with the main outfits, helping them, and tending their own livestock. This saved the expense of hiring extra help if each had tried to work his own cattle on his own. Each rider had his own string of horses to ride, and their care was his responsibility. Each morning horses had to be chosen for the type of work expected for that day, - tough ones for the longest, hardest rides, especially if it was not going to be possible to change to a fresh horse at midday. Buster had Snip and Billie Bryan for his own string and was proud to be one of the regular hands.

Mr. Seaborn's son Willie, a year older than Buster, was also a regular cowhand. The Seaborns lived in Quintana. Mr. Ernest Seaborn, Willie's older brother, who was a cantankerous bachelor always went along on the cowdrives. He was not an ideal cowman. He wanted to run things, but had no tact in handling the men, or ability to deal with emergencies. So everyone had to humor him along and let him think he was the "big boss". (His family owned a lot of the cattle). There are people like that in most businesses who have to be handled with "kid gloves".

In those days cattle raising was one of the big money making projects. Pasturage was cheap, and the cattle foraged for themselves. They endured the mosquitoes through the summer, and the wet northers and freezes in the winter. When a "big die-up" came, there were always enough survivors to start over. I remember "big die-ups" when Abe Addison would take a crew of negroes out to skin the dead stuff. The hides were always marketable and worth saving if found before spoilage.

Farming, boating, fishing, and oystering were also means of livelihood. So, many types of people settled around us. Farmers had children to put into school. They usually became permanent settlers. Their children grew up, married, and took part in developing the County. Others came, going into various ventures. Failures due to bad management, or bad times weeded some of them out. So, I always remember, "the fittest are the survivors". Hence, so many good people among the "old timers".

Living where we did at the crossroads, we saw all types of people. The boatmen, with their quaint jargon, coarse phrases, and offways of expressing themselves; The cultured ladies and gentlemen who came and waited for steamboat or stage to go on to Galveston; The fishermen and oystermen with their smelly cargos on their way to market, and asking for news.

I remember once, when two characters, a Major Hart and an old sea captain spent the night at our house. The Major would emphasize remarks with, "Just as sure as General Jackson fit the Indians, sir". The old sailor's assent would take the form, "Shiver me tops'ls, I know". We kids got to listening and giggling as they talked, so we were sent to bed. That was part of our education that never came from books. Also, the negros that lived or worked on the place told us about "hants", and many strange happenings that they knew about. We were sometimes afraid to go to the next room.

Dave Nance, who was an ancient colored man and one of our oxen drivers, was also a preacher. He sang many of the old spirituals: Swing Low Sweet Chariot; Some Say Dat Noah Was A Crazy Man When He Built His Ark At God's Command; and Pharaoh And His Boats Got Drowned In De Red Sea. Whenever we rode on the ox wagon with Uncle Dave, he sang for us or told us about when God first created this world we live in. He worked at it little by little until he got every detail lined up just to suit him. We considered him quite an orator and didn't realize that everything he knew about this matter, he had learned by listening and remembering. We would read our Sunday School lessons to him, giving the chapter in the Bible from which it was taken. I know that he based many of his sermons on the things we read to him.

I can't recall what year the Life Saving Station was built, but the contractor and several of his hands lived in the Fort House. They had a cook who brought his son, who was about Buster's age. He played with us and learned to row a skiff, ride a horse, fish, crab, and do every little chore about our place, but he invariably went to the camp to eat. The Government sent Inspctor Raynes to watch the station being built. At that time we had a spare bedroom, so he stayed and boarded with us. He spent part of each day at the station inspecting materials and workmanship, and seeing that it was being constructed according to the blueprints and specifications. Nearly every day he would ask me what I had learned in school that day. One day I told him, "I'm studying the U.S. Capitals". He said,"Oh, what is the capital of the United States?" I answered, "Washington on the Potomac". He then asked for the capital of Texas. I told him, "Austin on the Colorado". I was afraid of the next question, so I ran out. After that I tried to avoid any quizzes by him, as I had very little confidence in my ability to show off sucessfully. He played Euchre or Cribbage with the folks at night. When alone, he read books and papers or played Solitaire.

In due time the Life Saving Station was finished. Boats, tackle, and needed equipment were installed. Some of our local men went to Galveston for physical examinations to become crew members.

I remember that Uncle Bill Hudgins, Zan Follett, Henry Shannon, Bill Turk, William Jackson, and John Ames made up the first crew, under Captain Simmons. One of their duties was to patrol the beach at night and watch for flares or other signals from any ship in distress. On day duty a man had to sit in the look-out and keep a close watch with a spy glass for boats or people in trouble. Once a week they practiced taking the life boat out into the Gulf and reviewed procedures for rescue maneuvers. Occasionally, in rough weather, a ship would strike the jetties or get stranded on a sandbar. A rocket would alert the Life Savers and bring them to render necessary aid. Drills were held in firing the gun to send a rope to a ship in distress. This technique was used when the weather and seas were too rough to get the life boats close enough for rescue. After a line was established they could send out a "life buoy" or a "turtle shell" to effect a rescue. (The "turtle shell" was a sealed, covered boat that would hold several people). The crew had regular days for procedures practice, and crowds of people would be on hand to watch. That shows how we grasped at every opportunity for amusement in those days. "Ye good old days?"

When Captain Simmons came to take charge of the Station, his wife was in Galveston in the hospital very sick. When she was finally able to make the trip home on the steamboat, they got off at the landing at the bridge. Grandpa loaned them a horse and buggy for the drive from there to their house. He was at the landing selling cord-wood, and when he saw Captain Simmons bring his wife ashore in his arms, he thought he recognized the symptoms of her ailment. He went over and asked, and sure enough her problem had been severe dysentery, and it had not yet been completely overcome. Grandpa told them to drive by the house and he would give her a home remedy that would give her relief, and possibly clear up the problem completely. They accepted his offer and he measured out the potion and gave dosage directions. Mrs. Simmons' problem completely cleared up. Afterward, she was a frequent visitor at our house and would listen with rapt attention to every word spoken by Grandpa, as though he were an orator. She said as long as she lived, his name would be mentioned in her prayers.

I don't remember how long Captain Simmons remained at the Life Saving Station. The next man to take over was Captain Toland. He was there for several years. He was quite a pal of Captain Hutchinson, the superintendent of all the Coast Guard Stations - one of the "higher-ups". When he would come for his periodic inspections of the Velasco Station, he and Captain Toland would stage a drinking spree. The loyal crew members would keep things running as they should. Nearly every year there were changes in the crew, replacements resulting in new men. Some of them married local girls and settled nearby. Some would "go steady" with one girl for a while and later leave for greener pastures. One

of the crew, a Creole Frenchman from Louisiana, paid some attention to me - even proposed. But when he would come to our house, he would talk to Amme more than to me. Grandpa said, "He talks to Amme, but looks at Addie". However that may be, I did not care for him. Amelia did, and for a time they were engaged. She even planned her wedding dress and accessories. But something broke it up.

Captain Toland's health failed, and John Ames, one of the first crew members, was promoted to the Captain's office. He was newly married and his wife soon became popular in the neighborhood. Whenever he had to be away, she was afraid to be alone and would come over to our house.

In 1899 a flood of rains swelled the Brazos, Colorado, and San Bernard rivers to where their waters covered the entire coastal area from river mouth to river mouth. Captain Ames had to take his crew and lifeboats wherever needed over a wide area in rescue work. His, and the crew families were left in safety with relatives and friends. The Ames family came to our house. The Life Saving crew rescued people from tree tops, roof tops, and little isolated spots of high ground, where they were hungry, cold, and wet. It was more than a week before their work was finished and they came home. It was a tired, disheveled, dirty, and unshaven bunch of men that rowed up to our house. They were hungry, too. So Mrs. Ames and I made a huge platter of codfish balls, hot biscuits with butter and syrup, and plenty of hot coffee and milk to drink. Thus we cheered our returning heroes and sent them on, feeling better for having stopped.

I was visiting Mrs. Ames one day when a group of people came into the Station just sightseeing and acting smart alecky. One woman remarked, "I can be a perfect lady with certain people. My actions are determined by the class of people with whom I find myself". Captain Ames took offense. Looking at her contemptuously he said, "A perfect lady is a perfect lady any time, any place, and under any circumstances". They left, and Captain Ames apologized to his wife and I for having been exposed to such people. He explained that the Station was a public place and he could not screen out undesirables.

When Captain Ames was sent somewhere else, I think to the Galveston Station, his number one crewman, John Steinhart, became Captain. He married a Velasco girl, Minnie Douglas. He was there, still in charge when the 1909 storm came. The Station was badly wrecked, but was restored to service. A few years later, in 1915, another storm completely destroyed the Station, and Captain Steinhart lost his wife and daughter. Some others who were camping nearby came to the Station for refuge, and were lost also. Most of the bodies were found on the beach near Galveston.

After the Station was destroyed by the 1915 storm, it was rebuilt on the banks of the Brazos River. The name was changed to Coast Guard Station, with a crew on duty year around instead of only eight months as before.

In the Station's original location, Buster was often called as a substitute when one of the crewmen was necessarily called away. He received the same pay as the man in whose place he was serving. He enjoyed the work, except when he was called to fill in for the official cook. I think the men usually rotated, each taking his turn at the different tasks.

Now I must relate the final, and unhappy chapter in the story of Grandpa and the bridge. He had cared for the bridge for so long, it had become the center of his life. It never occurred to him that anyone envied him, or try to undercut him in the job. But it seems there were changes made in the Canal Company office in Galveston. New management was installed, and before Grandpa had any inkling of the change, a Mr. A. J. Simpson had applied for the bridge tender's job, and had been accepted. The first we knew of it was when, one day at school, one of the Simpson girls asked me, "When are you folks going to move, and where are you going. We want to move in right away". So, when I went home and told Grandpa what I had heard, he laughed at the idea of their moving into our house. But, shortly he was notified to turn over his books to Mr. Simpson. When Mr. Simpson called, Grandpa gave him the books and said, "The bridge is all yours". Mr. Simpson asked when he could move in and Grandpa said, "Sir, you have moved in. I won't again open that bridge for anything or anybody". Mr. Simpson was shocked. He said, "They promised me a place to live". Grandpa said, "They probably will build you a place later, but in the meantime you'd better fix up a camp to live in, for you have to stay with the bridge". Mr. Simpson fixed up a camp and some of the family stayed there all the time. He investigated, and learned that our house and all improvements, together with twenty five adjacent acres of land belonged to "Old Man Hudgins".

Grandpa loses job

Well, Grandpa never forgave Mr. Simpson for the sneaky way he slipped in and got the bridge job. After all, it paid a salary of only twenty five dollars per month.

The Company built a two-room house for the Simpsons across the canal from us. They had eight children at the time, and two more were born there. They had a milk cow, amare, and a few chickens. I don't remember that they ever raised a garden. Mrs. Simpson and the girls took in washing, and sewed for some of the negroes in the neighborhood, and some of the family were always fishing. Three of the girls married while the family lived there, and in time moved to Galveston. Later the rest of the family went there too to live. We were glad, for our families never fraternized and

we children were not allowed to associate with the Simpson children. We could not even walk to and from school with them. That made it very awkward for all of us.

Next, a family named Johnson moved in to tend the bridge, and stayed a few years. Amelia married Mrs. Johnson's brother, Bragg Meridith. Next, a family named Purdy from West Columbia took over. In September, 1900, Mrs. Purdy went back to visit in West Columbia, and while they were gone the Big Storm came. We had Mr. Purdy come over to our house during the storm. The hurricane's center passed over our area, and when the lull came we all went outside to look around. The moon was shining very brightly. We saw that the Purdy house was gone. Only the floor remained with not a thing on it. I never saw a man cry and take on as Mr. Purdy did. He told us about each thing which had been in his house, and how much each item cost. A stove and sewing machine were just barely paid for. None of his stuff was ever found. But his family was safe and most of their clothes were with them. I think Uncle Bill and Buster let Mr. Purdy have some clothes. He joined his family, leaving the bridge problems to others.

I think I have covered everything I remember, up to 1900, about the bridge that I knew so well. I don't think it was repaired after that storm. A pontoon bridge was arranged at the boulevard crossing. (More about the boulevard later). I think, for a time, Uncle Bill had charge of the new bridge. Later, Captain Peter Hansen was appointed permanent bridge-keeper. In earlier days he had run a sailing vessel between Velasco and Galveston. But after the V. B. & N. (Velasco, Brazos and Northern) railroad came to Velasco, he sold out his interests and bought a few acres of land at Ranch Prairie. He lived there for a while, until he felt again the pull of salt water, and a longing for another home near the Gulf. While he was waiting to build, Grandpa asked him to come and live with him as a companion, and as operator of the pontoon bridge. Grandpa was past eighty years of age and not able to do much physical work. But he still liked to talk, especially with old timers who knew something about the things he remembered. Captain Hansen built his home, but never lived in it. He lived on with Grandpa until 1909 when Grandpa died. After that he went to live with Uncle Bill on Oyster Creek. This was after the United States Government acquired responsibility for operating and maintaining the canal, and a new road and ferry crossing was installed near the Light House. The old road and bridge were no longer needed nor kept up.

This situation led Uncle Bill to buy some acreage on Oyster Creek where he built a home and moved Captain Hansen and Aunt Arie, (Grandpa's cook), out there with him. His hobby was gardening and making things grow. He set out every plant, tree, or shrub he could get hold of, and soon had no room for anything more. Aunt

Arie was old and became too feeble to take care of housekeeping duties. She went to live with younger members of family kin and died there a few years later. Uncle Bill got a negro boy, Barney Harris, to come an help out around the place. Captain Hansen's health failed and he went to the Masonic Home where he stayed until he died. Uncle Bill then boarded at Papa's house on Oyster Creek, where Amelia was keeping house and looking after Papa. Uncle Bill died there and was buried in the Hallowed Ground of the cemetery on the banks of Oyster Creek.

Now, let us go back a few years and pick up threads of activity that were of significant interest in the development of the communities near the mouth of the Brazos - and to me:

It was in 1891 that a big hotel was built at the newer site of the town of Velasco. Another was built at old Velasco (now Surfside). For the workers on this latter project, a boarding house was built, and, of all things, a saloon called Big Mac's Place. An artesian well was drilled. These facilities were on the site of the old Groce place.

One of the carpenters on this new activity brought his wife and four children. They could find no place to live and asked to camp in our blacksmith shop. Grandpa consented, but then he couldn't bear seeing Mrs. Collins and the children living in such inconvenient quarters. He told Mr. Collins that he needed a hay storage building anyway, and he would buy the lumber, nails, shingles, and other material, if Collins would construct the building. Then he could use the building to house his family while his job lasted. The result was a floor area forty feet by fifteen feet. This properly divided off, plus a lean-to kitchen added by the use of scrap and leftover lumber made reasonably comfortable living quarters for them.

Mr. Collins often had some of his fellow workers come over. A special enticement was to meet and play cards or dominoes with the Hudgins girls. One young man, Jim McLeod, would walk me back to our house and chat awhile - except when Uncle Bill was around and would come out and take over. Also, when Jim McLeod would call on me, Uncle Bill would join us and turn the conversation his way, and stay around until Jim left. He often said that Jim was the only boy that came to see us who knew anything worth talking about. He may have been right, for Cannon Waters, Tom Reeves, Jim Bollan, and other local boys were the ones he used for comparison.

While the hotel was being built at Surfside, a graded road was under construction from new Velasco to the beach. Our Fort House was being used as a camp house for some of the workers, and their horses and mules were fed, watered and corralled at our house. So,

we came to know most of the men. One boy, about twenty years old, spent most of his evenings and any other spare time at our house. I was so shy and timid that I did not suspect that I was the attraction. I was shocked when he asked me to become Mrs. Willie Menville. Afterward, I wrote to him for a long time, but don't remember where his home was. I think it was somewhere in East Texas. So, before my sixteenth birthday, I had had three proposals - none of them Mr. Right.

I had been deeply in love with Jim McLeod, but he never proposed. He showed me a ring one night and was about to say something when Uncle Bill showed up. Jim never got to that point again. So, my life may well have been different, had I not had an Uncle Bill.

Jim had a sister named Tennessee. His father, after his mother's death, had married a widow with children. There were one or two other children by this marriage. But Jim had not the love for any of this later family that he had for his sister Tennessee. He was working to save money to pay for a lawsuit involving his stepfamily concerning some property left to him and his sister by his father's mother. I don't know how that came out, for he went away and I never saw him again. Except for a few roundabout messages, I never heard from him again - my first love.

But, on with the story of the Surfside hotel and the graded road from the new town of Velasco: This road, called "The Boulevard", was wide enough to run a railroad track down the middle and have a vehicular drive on either side. The drives were never surfaced with shell or gravel, but since it had a ditch on either side, it drained quickly and well. There were two small bridges between the canal and town. One was over East Union Bayou, and the other was probably for cross-drainage. They did lay a railroad track from Velasco to within less than a mile of the canal. If a train coming into Velasco had passengers or freight for the beach hotel, it came on down to the end of the line. This service operated for a short time only during the summer of 1900. Steam locomotives made the haul. I visited in Angleton about that time for a week. I bought a railroad ticket to Velasco for the return trip home, and the train took me and hotel guests with various baggage and freight on out to the end of the boulevard line. A hack met the hotel guests. Buster met me. That was the only time I ever had the pleasure of the train ride down the boulevard.

Now, about the hotel: It was a much advertised summer resort. Also, the first year of its operation, a six weeks term of "Summer Normal" school was conducted there. Grandpa insisted that I attend. I rebelled - but I went anyway. I was sick one week, so wanted to withdraw. But since my tuition was paid, and rather than waste it, I kept on. The tests were a nightmare, except for English where I was okay. I wrote about historic Old Velasco and some of her important people - Colonel Reuben Brown, Rep. Guy M. Bryan, and others. I don't remember in detail what I wrote, but I am sure it reflected my pride in the fact that the first, full-fledged battle in Texas' struggle for her freedom from Mexico took place at Velasco. Well, I received a second class cer-

tificate, but I never wanted to go back to school. I never did.

During the 1900 storm some of the summer "cottagers" on the beach took refuge in the hotel. They came through safely, but the hotel itself was badly damaged. After that a caretaker was kept on duty, but the hotel was not open to the public for several years.

The caretaker during this time was a relative of Charley Alexander of Dallas, who then controlled the hotel and the V. B. & N. railroad to Velasco, with terminal and equipment. Mr. Alexander came to Velasco, looked the situation over, and decided there was too much money tied up in his venture to abandon it. Plans were made to repair and rebuild, and work on the Surfside hotel was contracted for.

Bragg Meridith, Amelia's husband, and a partner contracted the painting. Papa and Mose Alexander boarded with Amelia and worked at the hotel. Papa was a carpenter on the job, and I don't know what Mose Alexander did. He was a brother to Charley Alexander, and may have been just supervising the work. He also had some sort of official capacity connected with the railroad. He married a Velasco girl, Sadie Johnson, Bragg Meridith's niece.

When the repairs on the hotel were completed, it was opened up in "grand style". This was about 1904 or 1905. But, the very first season, it caught fire and burned to the ground.

During this period Doctor Jordan came to Velasco and married an Alexander girl - a sister to Charley and Mose Alexander. There was quite a mystery and a lot of talk about the Alexanders and the family money. I don't know much of the story. It was mostly hearsay and articles in a paper. That was entirely their business and didn't concern me. I do know that Sadie's husband was a heavy drinker and when "in his cups" he talked a lot. They eventually separated, and he died. She married again, more happily I believe.

The 1900 storm had destroyed the summer cottages and camp houses on the beach. The owners for a time lived in Velasco and drove to the beach for picnics, parties, or just for the drive.

During these years of development, destruction, and attempts at rebuilding, the lighter side of living was served by two dance pavilions at Surfside and one at Quintana. One of those at Surfside was operated in connection with the hotel and was only for the use of paying guests. The other one at Surfside and the one at Quintana were for the general public, and one or more dances a week could be found at one or the other of them. Usually a group would rent a pavilion for an evening and hire a band. Sometimes use of the pavilion would be free, with the owner's fee coming from profits from the cold drink and ice cream concessions, and rental of bath suits. I remember, especially, two dances I attended at Surfside. One was given by my crowd of friends, and one was at the invitation to accompany them by a group of friends from Angleton - the Jamisons, Bruners, and others.

In the course of the foregoing events Papa had married again. His new wife had been a widow, Mrs. Aurelia Waters, a sister to Aunt Emma Hudgins (Uncle Sam's wife). Papa built a house about a quarter of a mile from Uncle Sam's place, on Oyster Creek near Horseshoe Lake. In the marriage he had acquired a grown stepson, Johnny Waters. He and I had a few dates, and my stepmother hoped we would marry. But she wasn't an ideal matchmaker, and it didn't work out. Jonny later married a girl in Livingston, Texas, and they had three children. Things got rough with them, as he drank a lot and worked very little. When they asked for help, saying that Jonny was sick and not able to work, Papa said no, that he didn't have any money to waste. Aunt Real, as we children called our stepmother, became very angry and declared she would sell everything she owned and go to her son. So she did, selling all the chickens, turkeys and geese. She also claimed the hogs, as they had been raised from a pig Uncle Sam had given her. So she sold the hogs, and every cow and calf she could claim. Then she told Papa she wanted half the money the house was worth. He rode down to Grandpa's and borrowed the money. She left. Papa sat up that night by the heater, for she had taken all the bed-clothes. Next day he got some quilts from us, plus whatever else he needed.

Amelia and Bragg moved out to Papa's place with him, with their two children, Lorene and Charles. So, he had a home again. But times were hard and money was scarce, so when work opened up on repairing the beach hotel, they all moved to the beach for the duration of that job.

After leaving Papa, "Aunt" Real went to Livingston where she found her son in a chronic condition of drunkenness. She settled down and in a motherly way attempted to straighten out everything. He had debts that she paid, medicine and food that she paid for, and other needs she tried to supply, her hope being that he would respond to her ministrations, snap out of it and make a man of himself. He never did. When her money was gone, she went to work picking cotton at fifty cents per hundred pounds to earn enough money to come home. Suffice it to say that she did come back; and that Papa's heart must have been bigger than most, for he gave her a home and care for about twenty years until she died, Feb. 22, 1928.

By the mid-1890s I had grown up, had dates, went to dances, parties and picnics, and did everything the girls in our neighborhood had a chance to enjoy. So, onthe whole, I can look back on my girlhood days and see many bright spots I had forgotten. They are not worth enlarging upon in this write-up. I had some boyfriends that the family frowned on and discouraged, and others that they were pleased with. I don't know why any of them cared for me, for I was shy, had little to say, and blushed when I tried to talk. I liked to do needlework, including all sorts of sewing, tatting, embroidery, and drawnwork. I learned Tenerife work, Irish crochet, cross stitch

work, Brazilian point lace, and Battenberg laces. Also, at that time I tried my hand at writing poetry and essays. I was never satisfied with any of my efforts. I think I just wrote them because Grandpa gave me a typewriter and I wanted to practice and become proficient in its use. I never did, for at that time Amelia was married, Grandma was very old and tottery, so, I had to be housekeeper, cook, and general manager of the household. I had to meet, entertain, and cater to the needs of every transient guest that arrived. So, if I ever had any ambitions to become a writer, they died in their infancy. Maybe it was for lack of time, maybe for lack of talent, or maybe because of a habit of procrastination.

None of my boyfriends were of more than momentary interest to me until --. Well, Lon Follett, Willie Seaborn, and Buster (my brother) were always close friends. They had good horses, rode together, and would meet at our house to talk over plans for various enterprises they were always coming up with. I thought Lon was just one of the gang and treated him accordingly, until I began to notice that he would come in and stay and talk to me when the other boys went out to attend to some of their projects. So, I began to wonder, and think more about the situation. I decided that of all the boys I knew, he was somehow outstanding. He had a lot of pride and personality. So, as time went on, this feeling grew. I began to wonder if he really liked me, or was just being courteous and friendly.

One day Sanford Woodruff had a date with me. We went strolling on the beach, gathering seashells and a few gourds that had floated ashore. He asked me if anyone else had any chance with me while Lon Follett's horse stayed tied at our gate. I told him Lon was just one of Buster's gang. He said, "That's not the way I heard it." When we returned from our walk, Lon's horse was tied at the gate. Buster was not around. Lon was sitting there on the long porch talking to Grandpa. Sanford soon left and I started supper. Lon stayed, and that night I asked him to write in my autograph album. While he was writing I drew a picture on one of the gourds I had picked up. When he finished writing in the book he took my gourd and criticized my drawing. Then he wrote on the gourd while I read the verse:

"May joy e'er hover around you,
Like the seagull over the ocean wave,
And ne'er see the one you love,
Lie silent in the grave."

I thanked him, saying it was a nice wish. Then he handed me the gourd, and on the side opposite my drawing I read the words, "Addie, I love you." That was his proposal. I was nineteen and he was twenty one. We were happily engaged for several months - then, since the course of true love seldom runs smoothly, something happened to break us up.

A well-meaning, meddlesome friend told someone that he knew the rumor of our engagement had some basis, for I had written "thus and so" in one of my letters to Lon, and "something else" in another. I accused him of showing my letters around, and probably doing some bragging also. He accused me of doing the same. So, the rift grew, and for five years we never even spoke to one another. We continued to associate with the same crowd - he with other girls, me with other boys - but cold to each other. Some of my family were glad of the rift between us, while others said nothing at all. The main rejoicers were Amelia, Buster, and Uncle Bill. Amelia and Buster thought that if Jim McLeod ever came back, I might regret being committed to someone else. Uncle Bill thought Lon was a "spoilt", selfish boy who did nothing but waste his time and ride good horses.

Finally, a reconciliation was brought about by the interest and tact of Buster's chum, Willie Seaborn. He spent one afternoon at our house when Buster was away. He stayed around where I was busy-ironing. It seemed like in every subject we discussed, he brought up something about Lon. He studied my responses and facial expressions intently. He was sure he had seen what he was looking for, and hastened to tell Lon I still cared for him. That was all Lon needed, and the first few times he came to see me, Willie Seaburn came along too, to "back him up." So, after five years and our reconciliation, everyone in the family seemed to approve.

After that nothing but the elements interfered. We set a date to be married on Lon's birthday, Oct. 9th. In September, on the 8th, the great storm known since as the 1900 Storm came and wrecked Lon's father's house near the boilers and Lon's house in Quintana. A flock of sheep and some cattle he owned on the beach drowned. His father told him to buy some lots at Surfside and gather up all of the lumber left at the wrecked house at Quintana and at the place on the beach, and build a home at Surfside. Lon took his father's advice and started cleaning up the lumber in Quintana. It had to be brought over the river and stacked on the three lots he had bought. Moving the lumber from his father's wrecked two-story house was a different proposition. Between that house and Lon's lots the storm had opened two or three cuts in the beach from the bay to the Gulf. They had to haul the material to the bay shore and form it into a raft for floating down the canal. They had the help and advice of Mr. Ned McGraw, an old seaman, who had theories about the relationship of tides to the moon and stars. He advised them to to start their float under the light of the Morning Star. They reached the bridge that first night some time, completely exhausted and ready to be fed and put to bed. The next day they began tearing up the raft and hauling the lumber to the lots at Surfside. Of course, every carpenter around was busy reparing or rebuilding for himself or for someone else, since every building had had damage from the storm. Papa was working for Grandpa re-

pairing damages to our house. Lon talked him into building his house next. Of course, the 9th of October date passed with no wedding. We reset it for a date in December, which also did not work out. Finally, on January 2, 1901, we were married. It was a cold, blustery day with a northwesterly wind, and rain all day. Buster met the train in Velasco to bring the preacher out. He was from Angleton. Another preacher came along to serve at Joe Brockenbrough's wedding.

We were married at Grandpa's house. He asked us to have the wedding there, as three of his sons (Uncle Bill was a bachelor) had their weddings at the homes of their brides. Amelia had been married at Papa's house on Oyster Creek. So, for some sentimental reason originating in his dear head or heart, Grandpa requested that we be married under his roof. We were; and then had a turkey dinner with all the trimmings, plus a bride and groom cake. Lon's father, whom I always called Uncle Alex, came to our wedding. Also, Joe Holt and his sister, Myra Holt. Amelia, my sister, was there with her small daughter, Addie Lorene. That was all except Willie Seaborn, Grandpa, Uncle Bill, Papa, and Buster, and the colored help that worked for us.

After the festivities Lon and I went down to our unfinished house to begin our lives together. Jeff Evans (colored) was there with a roaring fire in the fireplace, and the house was nice and warm.

The house at this stage consisted of two big, main rooms and two bedrooms with a hallway separating the bedrooms from the rest of the house. One front room was assigned to Lon's father, Uncle Alex, who was to make his home with us. The other main room was to be used as a kitchen and dining room until we later would add two more rooms.

We soon plunged into the house-finishing work by installing overhead ceiling in rooms and on the front porch. Uncle Alex, without consulting anyone decided that the next thing should be a paint job. So he went to town and bought the paint, and helped with the painting - canary yellow with burnt umber trimming! It was very noticeable, but, even so, I didn't like yellow. Anyway, we were in our <u>first home</u>.

Charley Scogsburg and his wife lived on lots adjoining us on the right. An old seaman, Oscar Errickson lived alone in a two room house on the left. He humored and petted and fed our horses tidbits all the time. He sometimes upbraided Lon for working them too hard or leaving them out in cold, rainy weather

During the Summer of 1901, for some unknown reason, several families in our neighborhood had typhoid fever. It was on the 16th of

May I went to bed with a fever. It lasted three weeks, during which time Lon had the fever too. He was in one room and I in another. His fever was broken up in a week. The Schuster family had several cases of the ailment, and some of the colored people had it too. Our County Health Official, Dr. Carlton, investigated the situation. He was at a loss to pinpoint the reason for the outbreak. There was a suspicion that decaying vegetation, including lush growths of senna beans, which had been killed by the salt water flooding during the storm the previous Fall may have had something to do with so much sickness. There were accumulations of damp, molding masses of this matter on the ridge between our house and the gulf. Lon got a crew together and set to work cleaning up what we called the "bean brush flat". I am not sure, but I think the County paid for it.

Early in the Spring of 1901, Lon and Uncle Alex had bought some sheep that they tried to locate near San Louis Pass where there were no dogs or wolves or anything to molest them. One day after Lon's recovery from his fever, he was down at the "old place" by the boilers shearing sheep. That day my fever left me and Uncle Alex and I went down to watch him. When we got back home late that afternoon, I was aching all over and went back to bed with a relapse. I was down for three more weeks. A thing that shocked me most as I recovered and began to take notice of things, was a field of corn. When I became sick it was about eighteen inches high. When I next saw it as I looked out the dining room window, it had all been gathered and the dry stalks were left standing. How time passes!

I was pregnant at the onset of my fever, and Dr. Carlton told us I would be apt to lose the baby any time, since I was so weak and run down. In fact, he hoped that I would, for the prospect of a healthy baby was dim. However, after I began to recover, I did everything I could to build myself up, resting all I could. But when the baby came, about five weeks too soon, she was very small and puny - three and one half pounds, but perfect in every other way. Uncle Alex helped me with her. I am sure she would not have lived without the advice and help he gave me.

When we consulted other members of the family about naming the baby, my Grandfather said, "No one has ever named a child Caroline for your Grandmother." Uncle Alex said, "Lon's mother's name was Mahala." Lon and I consulted alone and decided Carrie May could be for Caroline and Mahala both. But neither of the old gentlemen ever considered that the baby was for either of the grandmothers. They didn't expect the baby to live, anyway, so little was said about the name.

When I see the care that premature babies now get in incubators in hospitals, I wonder still more about what people did in "The Good Old days" about a situation of that sort. Even now I don't know,

but we lived through it and saved the baby; with thanks to Uncle Alex, for having bought and studied a medical book in the earlier days when the few doctors were so far away and he knew he would have to depend on himself in emergencies, like broken bones, cut arteries, child birth, and all childhood maladies. His advice and help was frquently needed until the doctor arrived. So, I received the benefit of his patient help in caring for my tiny infant.

I think it was in 1901 or the next year that the citizens of Velasco organized a company to buy, sell, and find a market for such produce as fish, oysters, crabs, and shrimp. They were to build a camp house on the bay shore where the different fishermen could deliver their catches to them for delivery to Velasco where someone in charge was to take over and get it to market. In selecting a name for a proposed boat for the operation, Mr. Dingle suggested it be named for the daughter of Wharton Hoskins, our leading citizen and popular banker. Someone else spoke up to say that Sam Hudgins had a small daughter, too, whose name might be considered. And there were other suggestions. In the meantime, meetings were held, shares sold, and work even began on the receiving station building on the bay shore. Then, somehow the enterprise fell through. I think a rise in the river caused the oysters to die. I know that it was dropped very suddenly. Oyster Creek also, may have shared the blame. When on a rise it would bring down a black silt that killed fish, crabs and oysters. I remember seeing dead fish floating down the canal.

When Carrie May was sixteen months old, our second child was born - a big, nine pound boy, on the 24th day of March, 1903. I asked Uncle Alex to suggest a name. He said, "If I name him, it will be for brother Joe." Of course, I asked him for Uncle Joe's full name. Joseph Burgoyne, was the answer. "Oh," I said, "We could call him J. B." Uncle Alex said, "No, if I name the baby, we will call him Joe." So, Joe it was, and is yet.

On March 27th, three days after Joe was born, we had an experience that has never been duplicated in my lifetime since. Lon and his father went to Velasco, five miles away, where we did all our trading and received our mail. While they were gone a heavy, black cloud came up. I asked Aunt Betsy Bryan, my midwife-nurse, to see if she could pen up a mother hen with about twenty five baby chicks. She did, and came back into my room and asked about serving my dinner then, or waiting until the men got back. I told her the men would not eat before they got back, so we might as well wait. Carrie May was asleep in the next room. Suddenly hailstones hit the house, some of them the size of goose eggs. The wind blew from the west in very strong gusts, hurling the stones against the two west windows in my room. I wanted to get up and leave the room, but Aunt Betsy stopped me. Carrie May woke up and was scared, and came running to me. Aunt Betsy seized some quilts

and kept spreading them on the bed, where glass and hail were piling up. Aunt Betsy stood by, talking to me and praying for help. When the hail was over, rain poured in from the west. She got a quilt and was trying to fix it over the windows, when her prayers were answered. There were footsteps at the front door, and a voice saying, "I'm comin' in." It was Will Harris, a loyal, faithful, negro friend. He said, "Miss Addie, I've knowed you all your life, and packed you over mud puddles and sand burs when you was a baby; so I'm comin' in your room and take care of you now." He nailed something over the windows to stop the wind and rain from coming in. Then he took the quilts off my bed and shook the glass and hail out. The babies and I were safe and dry. He shoveled up the glass and hail, swept the water out the back door, moved everything, and mopped up the excess moisture. Then he built a good fire in the fireplace in the next room. Then he was satisfied that everything would be alright till Mr. Lon got home. While Will was busy, Jeff Evans, colored, had come over and helped too. Some of the Schusters came to help also.

Before Lon and Uncle Alex got home, they heard about our open house and rushed back to the lumber yard and hardware store to order glass. But they were too late. Others who had had damage got there first and bought all there was in town. Lon had stood in the street during the hail storm to hold the horses. They were frantic as they were pelted by those big, hard stones. Lon's hat was ruined, and he was sore with bruises. But he was amused by his experience - till he heard from home. Uncle Alex hurried into the house while Lon unhitched the horses and unloaded the feed. When he finished, he came in the house laughing, remembering his experience in town during the hail storm. Uncle Alex said, "Son, your wife and babies are safe, thanks to Betsy and the neighbors." Lon was shocked that there had been any danger to the family.

I don't remember how long our windows were boarded up. As fast as glass arrived in the stores, people were waiting for it. It seems like we were among the last to be served.

Some of the men and boys had a gay time picking up ducks and geese that were killed or crippled by the hail. I guess we ate some too, but I wasn't able to domuch with them.

In 1903 when Joe was my baby, we were going to the funeral of Mrs. Hoskins Sr. in Phair. For some reason we went through Velasco and stopped at Zan Follett's grocery store. He was closing the store, because of the funeral of such a well known person and was wishing for transportation to Phair. I offered to let him take my place, as I was dreading it. Lon never was much help with the babies and Carrie May was only twenty two months old. So I got out of the ordeal by giving my brother-in-law a chance to go.

Later that year the bank failed. It was owned by the Hoskins family and operated by one of three brothers. When it first failed, they managed to pay off fifteen cents on the dollar to all of the depositers, later on adding ten cents more. We didn't lose much ourselves, but Lon had been appointed guardian and trustee for an older brother's family, and all their money he was handling was in the Velasco bank. His three wards were nearly grown, and they all wanted their money dollar for dollar. They got it, but at a great sacrifice on our part. We were years recovering. I don't know the details of the bank's failure. It was rumored that large sums of its funds had been committed in backing the invention of a cotton picking machine that just didn't pan out before someone else beat them to it.

Bank fails

My next child was born January 6, 1905. Grandpa Follett observed that no one had ever named a baby boy for his father, William Bradbury Follett. So, after his wistful hint, the new baby was named William Bradbury. We all called him Braddy.

The Brazos river overflowed that summer. So did the Colorado and the San Bernard. Their combined waters covered all the coastal country, bringing down much driftwood, including huge logs, skiffs, larger boats, fence posts, bridges and other lumber. It piled up, making a solid raft all along the beach. The Press sent photographers to get pictures. One of them came to our house. He wanted a picture of Grandpa holding an old paper telling of President McKinley's assassination, and stories of a few other of his life-long remembered events. He also got a picture of Grandpa Follett (Uncle Alex) holding the same paper. Both old men were eighty two years old the year of that flood.

One incident related to the recovery period after the flood left its imprint indelibly on my memory.

For many years there had been in the Follett family a large, carved wooden figure of a woman. They referred to it as the "Lafitte Woman". I don't remember any specific mention of its origin, but the following connection seems plausible:

The first steamboat constructed in Texas was built by Lon's grandfather, William (John ?) Bradbury Follett, in a boatyard near Quintana, in 1841. It was named "Lafitte". It was to operate in and out of the ports at Quintana, Galveston and Sabine Pass. After about two years of service, it was caught in a gale on a haul from Quintana to Galveston with a cargo of cotton and hides. It was blown aground and broken up near San Louis. Since this was within the area of the early Folletts' operations, it seems reasonable to speculate that some sentimental family member managed to salvage the boat's figurehead. (Some of the cotton was salvaged).

Anyway, Lon's father and the "Lafitte Woman" had come to make their homes with us. The rather weathered and nondescript "woman" had a place outside in the yard.

One day after the floodwaters had subsided somewhat, Lon and "Uncle Alex" went to Velasco to try to round up needed supplies. I was home with the three children. Ineeded some kindling wood in the house, and told the ten-year-old negro boy, who was a fixture at our house, to get it for me. He was not gone long, returning with a fine lot of kindling. Later, I glanced out the window and knew something was different. Sure enough, the "Lafitte Woman" was in my kindling box. I sat down and cried.

When Lon and his father came home, I told Lon what had happened. He only sighed, and said, "Papa's going to feel mighty bad about this." I cried some more.

"Uncle Alex" did feel "bad". When he heard of the demise of the "Lafitte Woman", he just went and sat silently for a time on the porch. I cried again.

Neither of the men ever mentioned the matter to me again. And, so far as I know, they never talked to the little negro boy about it either.

What a possible treasure! what a way to go!

Grandpa Follett died the fall Braddy was just learning to walk. That was the year of the great California earthquake, when San Francisco burned.

When Braddy was little he liked to talk, and learned lots of Mother Goose rhymes and stories that I taught the children. One day some men who were vacationing on the beach came to our house to buy some watermelons. Braddy was asleep on a cot on the porch. one of the men said, "Get up, little man, and make us a speech." Braddy said, "Aljite", and stood up and said, "Ha, ha, ha, you on me, yitty brown jug, I wove tea." He made a big hit. One of the men, a Dr. Thornton, from Houston, noticed his breathing difficultics, saw that he had asthma, and promised to send him a remedy for it. He did, and after taking it one time Braddy never needed it again. Just having it in the house was a cure.

Vida was born February 8, 1907, making four of the "Tribe of Addie", as Grandpa called them.

Once, when shopping in Velasco, I had the four children with me. No one ever had baby sitters in those days. While I was busy buying, Vida found the stairway and made her way to the top where she found a long gallery with a bannister around it. The idea struck her two-year-old mind to get on the outside of the railing and walk around, precariously holding on. She did. Some men on the street saw her, stationed themselves under her position and quietly held up their arms to catch her should she fall. Lon slipped upstairs to rescue her. Everybody was keeping me occupied so that I wouldn't notice. I saw Lon coming down the stairs with the baby and asked why he went up. He said, "I went after Tee-Wee." (That was Vida's nickname). Then I was told what had just happened.

1909

We had some hogs running wild on the beach. Lon would go down to the area where they ranged about twice a week and feed them some corn, keeping them gentle enough to ride a horse among them. Also, we had two hundred head of sheep on the beach. Lon would shear them every Spring, and the big lambs were sheared in the Fall, too. He butchered one every Saturday and sold three fourths of it to the neighbors. We also had some good milk cows. So, with our garden, fresh meat, fish, milk, butter, and eggs, we needed trips to town (a distance of five miles) only once a week. Uncle Bill Hudgins brought out our mail every day.

The fateful year, 1909, changed all of this. We lost all of our hogs and sheep in the storm of that year. Our two milk cows survived by wading and swimming inland to higher ground at Oyster Creek. Lon found them and moved them to Angleton (which later became our home after this disasterous year). Those two cows were to be the beginning of a dairy herd that grew and grew!

Other tragic and strange events seemed to cluster during or near this year of 1909; One afternoon I was lying across my bed nursing a headache. Vida was asleep, and Carrie Mae, Joe, and Braddy were playing around in the house. Suddenly, a bright glare shone in my face through the window, and the heat was so intense that I felt like my clothes were afire. I raised up and looked out. A big body of the brightest light I ever tried to look at was passing out into the Gulf, or so it appeared. I had to close my eyes, and when I opened them again the light was not directly in front of our house and the heat through the window was not so fierce. I looked around for the children. They were okay, and not having been near outside doors or windows had not noticed anything wrong. When I looked out again the light was gone. Later when I went to bring in some clothes, mostly diapers, from the line in the back yard, they fell to pieces when I touched them. They were burned to an ash, but still held together. The curtains on all of the front windows were the same, even the one by my bed where I had been resting. Lon was

not at home. The children and all the rest of our clothing were alright. Mrs. Scogsburg reported a washing on the line at her house, that had the same fate as mine. I have always thought it was a meteor that fell in the gulf.

(The foregoing event fits in with my memories of the adversities that beset us in the year 1909. However, in recent years as I read of the great, brilliant body that exploded over Siberia in 1908, I am not sure that my experience could not have occurred in that year).

Another thing that happened in 1909, in the Spring: Lon was out at the Seaborn Camp at Ranch Prairie for the spring roundup. Miss Tracy Schuster was staying with me nights. One night during a thunder squall, lightning struck our hay barn. Suddenly the hay was a big blaze. I was getting up just as Mr. Oscar Errickson came by saying, "Your place is afire." I joined him outside in the pouring rain. Together, we pulled the surrey out of the barn and across the lot, then the wagon. We went back into the tool shed and got Lon's toolchest out, but were not able to go back for anything else. Beside the hay and the building, a small amount of corn was lost as the fire burned merrily on. Mr. Schuster noticed that the old cannon ball was red hot, and thinking it might explode, insisted we all go into the house. We did. In the excitement no one thought to take an axe and cut down the gate post and remove the gate, thus breaking the fire fuel line to the feed stalls and other fences. So, everything across the back of the three lots burned down.

I hired Will Harris, negro, and a boy to fix the fence and get the two calves back in. Then Lon came home to take over, and I went to bed. Working and standing out in the rain, and worrying, had been too much for me. Dr. Carlton came down to dope me with some of his best remedies.

I was still puny when Emma and Johnny Follett came down for their annual summer visit. One day while Emma was visiting Mrs. Scogsburg next door, Joe and his cousin Johnnie got into a game pushing each other down the steps. Somehow in falling, Johnny got his foot twisted, resulting in a sprained ankle. He screamed and cried until his mother rushed back to the house and became hysterical. I was trying to comfort Joe who was scared. Lon came in, looked at me and Joe, and then turned to Emma and Johnny. Johnny wouldn't let anyone touch his foot. I wanted to get the ankle in a pan of hot water, but he would not do it. Lon sent for Dr. Carlton. He first looked at me and told Lon to put me to bed. For an hour he worried with Johnny. He finally told Emma there were no bones broken and advised her to use her own best judgment about treatments. He thought the hot water was good. I was back in bed for a few days.

As the year wore on, 1909 had more in store for us - a hurricane!

On July 21, increasingly squally weather brought Captain Steinhart of the Life Saving Station to our house demanding that Lon go with him to the aid of a boat that had struck the west jetties and was in trouble. Lon looked at him in amazement, and said, "Don't you see the danger we are in right here, now? You, George Schuster, Charley Scogsburg, and I couldn't handle that boat alone, and that is all the crew you could get. I won't leave my family, and I think you and George should go back to your families." They started back. About that time the first waves started coming over the sand ridge. Soon the water was around our house. We began making our house as secure as we could. Not having time to collect boards, we took out the slats from the beds, and the extra leaves from the dining table and nailed them up at all the windows, with pillows and cushions behind them to save the glass. We piled the mattresses and dresser drawers on the tables, and put bread and other food items in protected places. Lon cut holes in the floor to reduce the house's floatability. By then the waves were coming in on our front porch, hitting the wall and dashing to the ceiling. The water rose to about fifteen or eighteen inches deep in the house.

Captain Steinhart and George Schuster never made it back to the Station. When they knew they were cut off from the Station, they turned and waded - sometimes up to their necks - a half mile to Grandpa's house. They made it, completely exhausted, but safe, hoping their families were safe in the Station. Before night, the one hundred mile per hour winds had subsided, the water was down, and we were cleaning up. Before night Lon went to Grandpa's to see about them. They were alright. Captain Steinhart and George Schuster had gone home, finding their folks safe, thanks to Tom Ayers who had been sick in bed for days. Tom had been watching the weather all day. When he saw it was worsening, he sent word to Mrs. Steinhart, Mrs. Cook, Mrs. Schuster, and a family of campers to take what food they had, and movable valuables, and go to the Station. Mrs. Steinhart's brother, about fourteen years old, helped with the moving and carrying messages. At first these folks felt there was needless alarm, but finally consenting to go, they barely made it to the Station in time. As the wind increased, the big double doors at the front of the Station gave way. Tom and the boy got everyone into the surf-boat and managed with the use of ropes to ease the boat through the back door and out to a thick hedge of salt cedar trees. The boat was wedged into the densest part and tied securely to the trees. There they rode out the storm. Tom ayers, Roy Douglas, the mothers, and the helpless children - thirty,-I think - were piled and wedged in, very uncomfortably, and having to fight off the tree limbs that were beating them. When the wind abated and the boat settled to the ground, they were very stiff and bruised. They found the Schuster house flat, everything washed away, and the other houses badly damaged.

Lon found harness enough to hitch horses to the surrey, and went down to that area of the neighborhood to offer help. He came back with Mrs. Schuster and four little ones. We cared for them for several days, until the older Schuster family could fix up two rooms at their place for them. I managed to find clothes for Mrs. Schuster and three of the children, but had to make the older girl dresses from piece goods I had bought to line quilts. It was a trying time with everything in the house to be dried out, and no chance to get fresh groceries. The chickens had drowned, so there were no eggs, and no milk until the cows could be found, brought in and gotten back to normal.

The children were all very good. Next day after the storm, Vida got out on the road. There was no fence to stop her and she was calmly making her way toward the river. Rex, our big dog, was doing all he could to stop her, by getting in front of her and making her go around her. She got tired of his interference and was half crying and fussing at Rex, when, suddenly, she was picked up by her Uncle Buster who happened to be on his way to our house from the river.

Buster had towed a barge up the river to Columbia. I think the barge was the Togo. The tug was the Idlewild. Both belonged to Uncle Sam. On that stormy day he tied up the barge as safely as possible and determined to fight his way down the river against wind and tide to Velasco. It was an all day struggle, but his stubborn determination won. He found no safe place to tie up so he ran the Idlewild aground on the river bank, tied her up safely, and went to bed. When he was drinking coffee next morning, Fred Brock and a companion came along. Their families were on the beach camping, and they were wild to get to them. Buster promised to take them, but asked them to wait until he could get his binoculars and see what could be seen toward the beach. As he came back from his viewing point, he saw that Mr. Brock had some men with prys trying to get the Idlewild back into floating water. He shouted and ran, finally making them hear him. He said, "My God, men. don't ruin the only chance we have to get to our people down there. There is not another boat afloat on the Brazos today." They were very apologetic and willing to do what he said. With his know-how they soon had the Idlewild afloat and were on their way to us. After hearing everything we knew about everyone, Buster went on to Grandpa's where he stayed on to help out. Mr. Brock and his companion found their folks safe.

The boat which had been in trouble at the outer jetties broke up in the storm, and the two men aboard her were lost. One of them was a local man named Maddox. They were the only fatalities in our neighborhood.

Lon and I decided to move our family away from the beach as soon as possible, but the water problem decided it for us. Our cis-

terns caught a lot of the gulf water during the storm tide, and caused all of us to develop severe stomach upsets, with me being hardest hit. So Dr. Carlton told Lon to get his family away at once - or else. My sister, Amelia, was living in Bay City, so we planned to go there until further arrangements could be made. So, by walking to the river, taking a boat ride to Velasco, a hack ride to the train, being met in Bay City by Amelia and her children, and walking nearly a mile, we finally got to her house. Lon caught the next train back to Brazoria County to try to find a place to move to in Angleton. He found three places for sale. One couldn't give possession at once; one, the owners were away and couldn't sign the deed for a time; the other he bought - a partly wrecked house and twenty acres of land. No fence or out buildings of any kind, and the blackest, stickiest mud I ever saw. It was like black wax.

As soon as Lon completed the deal, he came to Bay City for us. The visit there had not been a satisfactory or pleasant one. The storm had taken off the roof and upper story of Amelia's house, leaving only the lower story ceiling overhead. Before any type of repairs could be begun, daily rains (almost twenty four hours a day) continued to fall. The ceiling, of course, leaked, except for a limited area over the dining table. We piled the bedding and everything else we could on the table. We used the oil cloth table cover and a rain coat to shelter under, and hold the children together. I know they were relieved when we left.

We visited at Cousin Kate Callis's place till Lon could go down to the beach and manage to move everything worth moving to Angleton. They made us feel welcome, but things were not normal there either. Their cookstove had been damaged in the storm and they couldn't bake anything. They were all hungry for baked food. I suggested we make doughnuts. They asked, "Can you make them?" I could, we did, and they were a hit with everyone. So doughnuts were on our diet for the rest of our visit.

When Lon got to Velasco in the wagon (borrowed from Uncle Bill), he found a big barrel of assorted clothing, sent in my care for storm sufferers. He took it to our place on the beach, opened it, and sent for the neighbor women to come and take charge. The barrel was filled and sent by some friends in Houston, named Kavanaugh. The grateful folks were so pleased that they stayed and helped Lon pack, move the stuff to the river, load it on a boat that was owned by Gus Stevens, and see them off. Of course, he then had to meet the boat in Velasco with the wagon to haul everything to the railroad depot, load it in the box car, meet the train in Angleton, load things into the wagon again and make the haul out to the new place. The he came to Cousin Kate's place for me and the children.

Well, by then our household belongings were in a mess, and mixed up. Lon had packed things as he came to them - clothing, pots, pans, dishes, linens, quilts and toys, with odd things mixed up.

We sorted out things as best we could, set up a wood cookstove, and beds for the night.

The next day was Sunday. We decided for Lon to go to town (a mile), and get a Sunday paper. He found everyone around town in a state of excitement. Some prisoners had overpowered the jailer, took his keys, locked him in a cell, and escaped. Sheriff Gibson was calling for a horse. Lon dismounted and handed Gibson the reins. Mr. Gibson handed Lon a six-shooter and told him to go back home and halt everybody that passed. When I saw Lon walking home I knew something was amiss.

Aunt Lilly and Uncle Johnny Hoskins stopped for a short visit. That night we put the children to bed, and sat on the porch with the gun until nearly twelve o'clock. In the night we were called from across a ditch that ran between our house and the road, and told that the escapees had gone the other way, through Chenango, and that Tutt Harden, Lon's half brother who lived there had been shot. They wanted Lon to come. He went back with the men who brought the message. About daylight they came back for me. I gathered up the clean clothes we had, dressed the children and went on to Chenango. Tutt was dead when I got there, but Lon had been in time to talk to him. Tutt had stood out on a platform on the lookout for the escapees. He tried to halt two men going by. They both shot and he was hit. Tutt returned the fire and felt sure he had hit one of the men.

Mrs. Harden and the children heard the shots, then heard Tutt call, "Ed, Mama, come!" She gave Ed a bottle of brandy and told him to go as fast as he could, give him some brandy, and say she was coming. She had to keep her pace to a walk from the house to the store platform where he lay. Finding him still conscious, she got some bolts of cloth from the store to put under his head and some cotton to stop the blood. Ed had already phoned for Dr. Maxey and helpers. They couldn't do much for him. Lon was in the group with him at the end.

We stayed in Chenango to go to the funeral. It was at Scoby Lake, the old family home of Mrs. Harden. (Mrs. Harden's mother was born a Scoby. She first married a man named Jackson. They had two sons, both of whom died in early manhood. Mrs. Jackson's second marriage was to a Mr. Brown. Annie was their only child. When she was around sixteen years old, she married Tutt Harden. Her mother lived with them until she died in 1909).

When the funeral was over we returned to Chenango. We found the Sheriffs of Brazoria, Harris, and Matagorda Counties, with some deputies and leading citizens from all over the County, assembled there and busily organizing a "man-hunt." Ed wanted to join the posse, but everyone vetoed that, pointing out that he was needed at home with his mother and sisters. Annie then gave them a beef to barbecue when they made camp, and several horses for unmounted men to use.

Someone asked Lon if he would like to have the gun Tutt was using when he fell. Lon said, "There is nothing I would rather have." But I noticed Ed looking so helpless and desolate, so I said, "No, no! That is the thing his son should have. Don't give it to Lon." Lon agreed to that, and Ed's sister Ella suggested giving "Uncle Lon" the cuff buttons he was wearing.

Before they left to begin the hunt, Annie told Mr. Munson, "I hope you catch those men and let ME do what is done to them." He said, "I hope you have the privilege." A few hours later a message came that Mr. Munson was shot dead. Lon was riding beside him and was the first to reach his side. They had ridden up to a negro's house and Mr. Munson called out for everyone to come out. He was answered by a shot fired from under the house. Lon and the others fired several shots, but they never found the culprit. They did find some blood stains. I think the escapee had lived in that house and was serving a term in jail for killing his wife. The other escapee had been working for Joe Jamison and had stolen Mrs. Jamison's watch, some money and other valuables.

The hunt went on. A bread wagon from Houston brought bread, coffee other helpful items. Continued lack of success drove impatient members of the quite large group to degenerate into an unruly mob, drinking everything they could get their hands on. Sheriff Gibson held a consultation with some of his responsible leaders and decided to break camp, dismiss the crowd and continue the hunt quietly with a small posse.

Lon came back to Chenango to check on things, and found that two of the drunken posse members in riding through Chenango had shot down three negro men they saw, and left them lying in the road. No one would venture to remove them. Ella Harden and her boyfriend had barricaded themselves in the store, and the two drunks had ridden around it cursing, shouting, and shooting at the store. Lon went in the store and told Gibson, by phone, what had taken place. He was told to get the bodies out of the road, and arrest the two men if he could find them. So, with Jeff Driscoll's help, he put the bodies in a negro church nearby.

For the moment, everything seemed to have settled down. The children and I stayed at Mrs. Harden's house while she and Ed went to Angleton on business. She had an old negro man and wife working in the house, and two colored men working outside. On her return we were talking when suddenly the two drunks appeared again, riding up to within about two hundred yards of the house, and began calling and waving. Lon and Ennis Herring (Herring was the husband of Ed's and Ella's sister Maggie), hearing the commotion came upon the scene, and advanced to talk to the drunks. They demanded that the two negros they saw outside should be sent out to be shot, or Lon and Ennis, themselves would be shot. Lon said, "Well let us go back to the house before you begin shooting." They walked back toward all of us standing on the porch. Before they reached us

they motioned us to get into the house. Lon then told the two outside negros to mount the two fastest horses, take wire cutters, and ride an around-about-way to the Weems place. They did, but were seen, and shot at, with a bullet going through one man's hat. Our two drunks, then, not seeing anyone to shoot at, began shooting at the side of the house. We were all in the kitchen with the children, crouched down behind a big cast iron wood stove. No one was hurt, but afterward we found five bullets embedded in the wall.

The men rode away, as if they were leaving. Shortly afterward, Lon rode down the road looking for them. He found one of them asleep beside a fence, with his horse tied nearby. He woke him up, disarmed him, put handcuffs on him, and brought him to the house. He was just a boy, about twenty years old, and as sick as he could be. I asked Lon to take the handcuffs off. The other ladies sided with me. I asked the boy if he had a mother. He said, "The best mother in the world, and if she saw me now it would break her heart." Annie asked him if that was his gun. He said, "No, I never used a gun before in my life, but got it and came here to help avenge what was done to that brave Mr. Harden." So, we asked Lon to put him in a comfortable bed, take his boots off, and let him sleep it off. About that time Sheriff Gibson arrived. He had reached the end of his endurance and patience. He yanked the boy out, put handcuffs back on him, and took him over to the Angleton jail. That was all I knew about that event personally. Everything else was hearsay.

Another event of the man hunt was sad. Mr. Henry Golden was placed to guard a railroad crossing and told to halt everyone who passed, and if anyone acted suspicious not to hesitate to shoot. He halted a man carrying what he thought was a gun over his shoulder. He halted but didn't speak, and was taking the object off his shoulder, when Mr. Golden shot. It proved to be a boy from a good family who had been following a harvesting outfit. He died. At first they could not locate his family. So, the Methodist Church people took over and gave him a nice funeral. Later his family was located. Some of them came to Angleton, found out all the circumstances, understood, and held no resentment toward anyone, even after talking to Henry Golden who was feeling very blue.

Lon offered $500.00 reward for any word leading to the arrest of the escapees. They were never caught. Dan Robinson and Joe Jameson went to Oklahoma to see some men captured there. They were not our men.

Finally, we got back to the place at Angleton, hoping to get settled right away. We hired a colored man named Ed. Best to dig post holes and get a fence around the house. About dark that first day home, we were all relaxing on the porch, when a man called from the road and said he had a message for Lon Follett. Lon, still thinking of recent experiences, asked him to read the

message. He read, "Grandpa died last night. Will be buried tomorrow. Signed, Buster." We went down on the train next day with Uncle Reese Sweeney. We found a conveyance in Velasco and joined the funeral procession on Oyster Creek. The coffin was opened at the grave, which is not usually done. It was done for my sake. My family stayed at Uncle Sam's that night, and Uncle Reese went home for the night with Uncle Charley. (Upon leaving Velasco for the funeral, we had been asked to tell Oscar Hudgins to hurry home; that he had a new son at his house. That was W. O.).

The next day we went home and began work in real earnest. A temporary well was put down near the back door. The most important event for the children was discovery of the first crawfish they ever saw.

About this time, another family sadness was the death at Velasco of Otis Follett, Zan Follett's oldest son, and a nephew of Lon's. He died of a very contagious form of meningitis. Immediate burial was recommended with no indoor funeral service. A short service at the grave was permitted. Lon rode down to Phair for that.

As soon as things were made livable at Angleton, Lon and Ed. Best went down to the beach to rebuild storm damaged fencing around our place down there. I was not feeling well when Lon left, and by night on the day he got back, I couldn't speak or swallow. Lon called Dr. Maxey who told him to send for my family, that I was in serious condition. He phoned Amelia in Bay City and Papa at Oyster Creek. Amelia spent all night getting herself and children ready to catch the four o'clock train the next morning. They got a hack to bring them out to our house from the Angleton depot. They were relieved to find me still alive. Lon was relieved to have them there.

Dr. Maxey had told Lon that when, and if, I could ever swallow, to give me some Epsom Salts. A day later I made a dry swallow and took a small sip of water, and got it down. So, Amelia hurriedly fixed the dose of Salts. The first swallow burned and hurt so that I screamed and vomited. Amelia was scared, thinking maybe she had given me the wrong thing. She showed it to me and I nodded that it was alright. She weakened the next dose a little. I managed to get it down a little at a time. From then on I swallowed liquids and began to whisper. When I was better Amelia went down to Oyster Creek to see kinfolks and friends there.

Shortly after, during the holidays, we heard that Uncle Harrison Graham was very sick. Lon went over there to check up and then came back for me. When we were at the gate, Mrs. Ruby Stratton came out and said, "Kate Callis just died". I said, "You mean Uncle Harrison." She said, "Both". I went in, and it was true. Kate had been coughing and strangled to death. I helped with laying Kate out, and was arranging her hair when Dr. Maxey came in. He

was shocked to see me there. Lon told him I had come because these people were my folks. Dr. Maxie looked at Vida, picked her uo and brought her to me, and said, "Mrs. Follett, I command you to go home at once." I said, "I can't right now." He said, "This baby has fever now and should be home in bed." He told Lon not to let me stick my nose out of the house, even if he had to lock me in and stand guard by the door.

Well, Vida was just taking a cold, but I had to stay home anyway. Word got around that Kate died with diphtheria, that I had had it, and that all my children had been exposed. Miss Clara Hurst came to offer to stay and help out. I promised to send for her if I needed help, but we were fine at that time.

Papa and Uncle Charley came to see about me. My stepmother became very upset because I couldn't eat some fruit cake she sent me. I was still on liquids and gruel.

So, the year 1909 with all its hardships and confusions ended - the worst year of my life.

Before getting settled completely into our activities on our place in Angleton, Lon went down to the Seaborn Ranch for two purposes - to gather and divide the Follett cattle, and to help with doing the same with Grandpa Hudgins' own personal brand of cattle. While there, one day he roped an unruly steer. His saddle came loose and he got a nasty fall, ending up with a broken leg. They took him to camp, then managed to move him to Velasco. Dr. Carlton cut his boot off, set his leg, and put it in splints. When the Doctor started to phone for me, Lon stopped him. He said he was going home and didn't want me to know anything about it until he got there. He had his way and was at the gate before I was aware of anything. Dr. Maxey came out, examined the leg, and wanted to reset the bones and encase it in a cast. But Lon stobbornly said, "Let it alone; it's my leg, and if it grows together crooked, it's still my leg." So, his stubborness was to blame for the bump on his shin bone, and a slight limp for the rest of his life.

Lon went to Webster to see about some dairy cows advertised for sale. He bought several Jersey cows and a registered Jersey bull named Dick Dowling. We Kept Dick Dowling for several years and traded him to the Young brothers for a registered bull named Bill McKinley.

Lon's leg was still weak and unsteady, when Frank Nevels and Dan Robinson came out to lock at some two-year-old stuff we had for sale. Lon insisted on going with them, and, of course, when roping had to be done, he did it. With one catch, the rope tangled on his arm and he came back to the house with a broken arm.

Although misfortunes still seemed to be following us, we did manage to get some good milk cows together, and shipped cream to the creamery in Alvin. We bought a DeLaval cream separator and cream

early 1900's Alvin creamery

tester. All the farmers with cream to sell brought it to Mr. Ned Cannan in Angleton, and he shipped it every day to Alvin.

All of our twenty acres in Angleton not occupied by the house, out buildings and their grounds, was planted in vegetable garden, cotton, corn, peanuts, sweet potatoes, along with some pumpkins and cushaws. We raised a variety of good things to eat and to sell.

In the years after our move to Angleton, our family was blessed with three more little girls. The first one I wanted to name Amelia for my only sister. When she was born on Jan. 3, 1911, all the family and kinfolks said she was such a precious jewel, to please call her a jewel. So, she became Ruby Amelia. She was called Ruby, except for years the other children called her Buby.

In 1914 the next girl was born - Aug. 21. Without any argument or friction about it, I named her Ella Viola - two names I always liked. The name Ella was for Amelia too.

In 1916 I was again expecting - a baby boy. The name was to be Charley Hudgins. But, came July 21, it didn't work out that way. So, we named her Lonna Hudgins, the Lonna honoring her Dad, Lon.

When Ruby was small, she walked up behind a horse and he kicked her over, jarring her spine and knocking her unconscious. Dr. Maxey came and left some medicine for her, and said to call if there was any change. That was the longest night I ever spent, just watching her and not being able to do anything for her. The others slept some. Once in the night, she moved and opened her eyes. I raised her head and gave her the medicine. She swallowed it and lay back, seeming just the same. In the morning she woke up, gave Lon a mischievous smile, put her arms around my neck, and said, "It's all my mama now." That was the sweetest sound I ever heard. All the other children came to see and hear her, seeming to understand how near we were to losing her. Dr. Maxey called early in the morning to ask about her and could hardly believe me when I said, "She is up and playing very happily." He said, "What kind of children have you got, anyway?" (He had thought she would not live through the night).

Later, Ruby had another serious accident. Her brother Joe had called to their sister Vida to bring him a shotgun and a cartridge - to shoot a hawk, or something. She got the gun and was running with it, with Ruby following right behind her. The gun turned out to be loaded, and the jolting (or accidental triggering) set it off. Both girls screamed and I ran out of the house to them. Ruby had been shot in the upper arm, and her sleeve was afire. I caught the fire in my hands, first thing. She was standing up looking scared and asked, "Is it still coming?" A large piece of flesh had been shot from her arm. We phoned for Dr. Maxey, but he was out.

So Dr. Motheral came. He had served in the military and was used to gunshot wounds. He said the hot shot pellets and fire had made it sanitary. He said it was simple and would heal fast. It did, and filled out, leaving a scar that is seldom noticed.

Ella had one of my childhood failings. She blushed and stammered when she was excited. This gave her lots of trouble in expressing herself, with difficulty in school because of it. After reaching maturity, this "failing" didn't hinder her in continuing to make friends and find ways to be helpful. She liked to ride horseback. Joe had a horse named Baywood, that he told Lon never to let the kids ride, because he wasn't dependable. One day, in spite of the warning, Lon sent Ella on an errand into the pasture on Baywood. The horse ran away with her and only stopped when he blindly crashed into a wire gate. That threw him down and threw Ella clear. I never could see why she was not badly hurt. Joe sold Baywood to the Sulphur Company at Hoskins Mound soon afterwards.

The four older children started to school in Angleton. Carrie Mae finished school there. We moved to Danbury the year she was graduating, and she boarded in the Elmer Stockwell home the rest of the school year. Professor Foster advised the graduation class to take the County teachers' examination. Carrie Mae did. She got a teacher's second grade certificate. She applied for, and got, a little school at Pleasant Bayou (a neighborhood on the east side of Chocolate Bayou, south of Liverpool). Before school started she borrowed some money and went to Huntsville to the Teachers' State Normal School. She studied hard and came home with a first grade certificate. She was prepared to go ahead. When her school closed she paid her debt, and also had money to return to Normal School where she upgraded her qualifications to a Permanent Teacher's Certificate. She next taught at Danbury a couple of years, and then went to Fort Bend County to teach.

There the course of her life was changed. She met and married Eldridge Brumbelow. She was about twenty five years old at the time. She had brought him to visit us one weekend, but we didn't know they were serious about each other. They were married just before the close of that, her final school teaching year.

"Bud" and Carrie Mae had three children. The first, a lovely little girl. Then followed two boys, two years apart, but birthdays of each on June 20 - which was also my father's birthday. He was proud of being one of "triplets".

Carrie Mae died while the children were small. After a time "Bud" married a lady who was a wonderful "mother" to his family. She died about the time the children were grown. Myrtle Mae became a teacher, and married a teacher. Joe became a Baptist preacher, and has a son who is an evangelist. Billie Brumbelow took vocational

courses in the industrial construction field, in Junior College, and has no problem remaining employed. As a sideline he trades in real estate, or just about anything else that appears to offer a profitable return. The three children have interesting families.

Back to our move to Danbury in 1919. Joe, Braddy, and Vida transferred to the Danbury school that year. (When Braddy started to school in Angleton, he was registered as William Bradbury. Of course, all of his teachers called him William. His classmates called him Bill, as he warned that if anyone ever called him Willie, he'd fight. So from then on, he was Bill).

Joe went to work at Hoskins Mound with a boilermaker riveting crew. When the work was finished there, he went with the gang to Oklahoma, then on to other places in the same kind of work. When he next came home, his hearing was almost gone.

That first summer in Danbury, Lonna was following the older children one day, as they were picking grapes. They were using a ladder, and somehow it fell on her. Bill rushed to the house with her in his arms unconscious. We bathed her face with cool water from the pump. She didn't seem hurt much, and was soon alright.

While Joe was off working, Bill finished school and worked a year or so at Hoskins Mound. Then he decided to go try his luck where Joe was working. He was with him when Joe's ears were so bad. They "drug up" and came home together. From then on they worked together most of the time - sometimes with Lon in the hayfield, or at other work that came up. They ended up in Houston on the water front, as longshoremen, where they stayed. Joe was twice injured on the job. One very serious injury left him with aftereffects which are still bothersome. Joe was married shortly before this bad injury. Bill was married soon afterward to his second wife, his first wife, Evie, having died.

Bill volunteered for service with the CBs in world War Two. While he was in the Admiralty Islands he received a "Dear John" letter from his wife, asking for a divorce. Supposedly, she knew that a one-time-sweetheart still cared for her, and she wanted freedom to marry him, as she still felt that she loved him. It turned out that he decided to marry someone else, and she decided that she didn't want a divorce after all. When Bill's tour of duty ended, he was sent home first to a hospital in Corpus Christi to recuperate from a bout with malaria. We visited him there and found him improving, and engaging in light duties around the place. Juandine went to see him, and stayed around several days nagging at him to take up where they had left off. They were finally divorced, and she remarried right away, and had several children. She was an enormously large woman when I saw her last, weighing about 300 pounds.

Bill was granted a small disability pension for injuries and sickness caused by his service in the South Pacific Islands. He resumed work on the water front in Houston, Galveston, and sometimes in other Gulf Port towns.

Once during a water front strike, Bill was sent to New York to represent the Houston I.L.A. interests. He was there for several weeks. The Taft-Hartley Act, passed by the Congress helped to speed settlement of such strikes.

Bill tried one more voyage on the sea of matrimony, but later, for causes known only to them, they separated. Each went his and her separate ways.

Bill retired at age sixty five and moved to Angleton. Joe had retired two years before, and moved onto the home place at Danbury.

After school days, Vida moved to Houston, and while working there met and married a Scotchman, named Tom Cochrane. They lived in Houston and produced five girls. One of them died in her early teens. The other four married and have families of their own. At this time three live in Houston and one in Baton Rouge, Louisana. Their stories are their own to tell as they like. With her children on their own, Vida went into vocational nursing.

Ruby started to school in Angleton, then entered the Danbury school when we moved there. She went back to Angleton where she roomed and boarded through the eighth and ninth grades. She came back to the Danbury school for the tenth and eleventh grades and graduation. She then took a business course in Houston, but ended up working in DePelchin Faith Home, and later as governess in a River Oaks home. All of this ended when she came home to marry her eleventh grade classmate, Arsdell A. Callihan, from Liverpool, Texas. They spent their first years together moving from one site to another while he was working for a seismograph petroleum exploration company. Just before Evie, their first child was ready for school, he obtained a job with the Dow Chemical Company at Freeport. They established a home at Oyster Creek and settled permanently. There the three Callihan children grew up, went to school (in Velasco and Freeport), learned to hunt, swim, boat, and fish with a regular gang - in fact, they had a happy childhood.

College, courtship, marriage, all arrived in due time. Evie, then Kathy were married and moved away. When it was David's time for college, he settled for Washington State University. Evie's husband, Jim, was teaching there, and Evie was filling a place of her own in many useful ways. David's years at Washington State passed slowly, one by one. He found employment or extra school work there during most summers and got home infrequently. One summer he had a research project at Berkeley, California. After receiving his Bachelor's Degree he was called into military service. I will leave his and his sisters' stories beyond this point to them.

Ella grew up in Danbury, and after getting out of school, she met and fell in love with Jack Kozlek, who operated a shrimp boat out of Galveston. Since he was out on the boat most of the time, and she could not live on it with him, their marriage failed and they were divorced. Jack courted her again, but she couldn't face the same life over again.

She next married Carlos McEachern. While he was in boot camp in World War Two, he developed a cough and was unable to go on. He was discharged with one hundred percent disability, and died about three years later with tuberculosis. He was a fine boy.

Ella found work in Angleton, where in time she married Joe Craddock, an electrician with Dow Chemical Company. They first lived in Angleton, then moved to a mobile home park in Clute. He sickened with lung cancer and after a long lingering illness passed away.

Not used to living alone, and being attractive, she chose to marry again in 1969, to a man named Smith. Family and friends call him "Smitty".

Now I come to my youngest girl, Lonna. She married before either Ruby or Ella, when she was only sixteen years old. So she grew up and developed with her children. Wanda and Ray, her first and second children grew up and married, and Jim, her last, was in his second year in college at A & M, when she developed a malignant brain tumor and died.

Having now told about my children growing up, leaving home and making places in the world for themselves, I will drop their stories at this point. I still love them and am proud of any achievements they may accomplish, but I realize they are on their own from now on.

Before closing these pages I must pick up some highlights in my life that either have not been fitted in thus far, or which due to their boundless influence in charting my destiny, deserve further comment:

First, just one more long glance back at the close family group which constituted the center of my childhood world, the influence of whose members has not deserted me for a day of my life:-

J. L. Hudgins (my Grandfather) believed in giving his boys a chance to develop into good citizens, and to use all the common sense, or ability, they had to become really worthwhile, responsible people. Thinking of each boy, he felt that each should have a trade to work at when necessary.

So, beginning with John (my Father), early in life, he taught him

all the different phases of blacksmith work - how best to do it, the proper use of all his tools, good planning of the job, and above all, always to be able to guarantee his work. Also, John was taught how to repair and overhaul wood and coal burning engines. So, while the country developed and new ideas were brought in, inventions and discoveries made, his early knowledge was useful. Talent? Practicality? Both?

Grandpa taught William (Uncle Bill) to operate the store. This involved buying, selling, restocking, crediting, accepting goods in trade, what and when to ship or sell locally, and being patient and courteous with all sorts of customers. The store was often used as a passenger center for steamboat travelers. Later the Huddins building was used for a warehouse, where freight coming or going by boat could be stored. William's experience enabled him to move up and capably manage other stores. Talent? Trade?

Grandpa took Charley to Galveston to a tinsmith, where stovepipe, buckets, dippers, and other sheetmetal household articles were made. Charley was to work there and learn the trade. But shortly after Grandpa left him and came home on the steamboat, Charley got a job setting type for a newspaper, and sometimes reporting bits of news he picked up. So when Grandpa went bach later to see how Charley was doing, he found him happily working as a printer's devil, and a cub reporter.

Thus, Charley started in newspaper work, leading to ventures in the publishing business. He sometimes went broke, but never lost his flair and determination for that sort of work. He also studied law and tried his hand as a prosecuter. But the first time he had to prosecute a man for doing something which he himself would have done under the same circumstances, he knew he was in the wrong place. Because of fragile health he went into other less strenuous phases of law practice. He continued to write articles, and had two books published.

A most amusing incident I recall about Uncle Charley happened while he was living in Alabama. A Republican friend who was going on a tour of Europe, asked him to take charge of his newspaper and write the editorials. An editor (a Democrat) of another paper, not knowing of the other arrangement, asked Uncle Charley to do the same for him while he went into a sanitarium for needed therapy. When the two editors finally came home, they found that through Uncle Charley's editorials, they were politically at each other's throats. Talent?

Grandpa's son Sam (Uncle Sam) was usually to be seen riding a horse, using a rope, chasing cattle and otherwise showing a strong inclination for outdoor work. Nothing could induce him to study

for any kind of "book-learning" career. He was a successful trader and businessman, and left behind him footprints in the sands of time.

A prosperous family. -- Talents?

I had always hoped that someone in my family would become a writer. Only Uncle Charley, since I can remember, has shown any ambition along that line.

Family research has shown that an ancestor named Weems was a writer and a preacher. He was a friend and associate of both George Washington and Thomas Paine. The latter was berated as an iconoclast, giving great offense to the orthodox theologians of the world by his "Age Of Reason", and "Common Sense" writings. It seems that Weems used some of the Paine logic in his pulpit, resulting in the loss of his church, and his becoming known as "That Lying Preacher". He wrote a biography of George Washington, and I don't know what else. It is all out of print now, and limited research can find none of it.

Now, to the "fitting-in" of some thus far by-passed, more recent events:

A BRAZOS FLOOD

In December of 1913 heavy rains caused the Brazos River and other rivers to overflow. The waters joined and swept through lowlands, washing away homes, and forcing people to climb to rooftops, tall trees, or any elevated areas they could find. Every boat available was busy rescuing people around Wharton, Fort Bend County, and the Columbia area.

We thought our place east of Angleton was safe, until we saw water pouring over the railroad dump, filling ditches and spreading out. Lon got all the children to help him in throwing the corn, just gathered, up into the loft of the barn. He made an elevated floor above the chicken roosts and put all the chickens on it. He nailed high sideboards onto the wagon bed and moved it to the hog pens so he could transfer the swine into it for safety. That was all to be done outside. Inside the house, we picked up everything from the floor, piled dresser drawers on tables, and clothes in places to keep dry. A supply of water was in the house, including stove reservoirs, when a Coast Guard lifeboat came to a window. We were told to crawl through the window, and to bring all the clothes we could. I didn't know where we could go. Lon told the men to take us to Reese Sweeny's. They did. I worried about it until we got there and saw that Uncle Reese had a plank walk from the top of his gate to the front door, well above the water. He met us at the gate and made us feel wercome. Lon went on with the boat to help with further rescue work. Before he came back next morning, he went out by our place and brought back one of my fruitcakes and a

ten-pound bucket of fried pork packed in lard. That helped with the food, as our County tax Assessor-Collector, Captain Cobb and his wife, were also at the Sweeney home. Ruby (about three years old) entertained everybody by telling everything she knew about the family and neighbors.

As soon as the water was out of our house, we went home in a boat. One of Mr. Kastl's big hogs had gotten into our house, found a nice dry place on a feather bed, and stayed put until he was rescued. Later we got a nice bait of fresh meat when it was butchered.

THE 1915 STORM

We were still living in Angleton in 1915 when in mid-August warnings of an impending hurricane alerted coastal Brazoria County. Some of our neighbors, never having experienced a gulf storm, asked us how to prepare for it. We showed them how to wrap pictures, bric-a-brac, prized dishes, lamps, and other things that couldn't be replaced, and to place them betweeen mattresses. One family came over to stay with us.

The morning after the storm we heard that the Coast Guard Station at Velasco had been wiped out. Captain Steinhart's wife and daughter, with others, were lost. So Lon rushed down there to help. He was with Captain Steinhart when Minnie, his wife, was found. One girl from the Station washed ashore, alive, near Galveston. She lived, the only member of her family to survive. I don't remember how many from the Station were lost in that storm.

THE 1932 STORM

We were living in Danbury when this storm was reported threatening just before mid-August. It was coming directly toward Brazoria County, according to all reports. Joe and Bill left Houston attempting to come to us in a small, light car that belonged to Joe. They could hardly hold the car on the road. They made it to Angleton and found the town going to pieces. People were working frantically trying to rescue other people in danger. Joe and Bill jointed the effort and helped until the wind abated, then went to get their car to come to us. A roof had fallen on their car and it was some time before they could dig it out. The car would still run, so once more they were on their way to Danbury. Before leaving Angleton, they heard that Uncle Sam Hudgins and Aunt Emma had both been badly hurt, and a grandson had been killed, when their big house was wrecked in the storm.

The boys found us safe, but with most of the roof gone from the house. Some outbuildings were down and a number of sheep were crippled. I was trying to prepare breakfast. Lon had Joe go out and

shoot the sheep that couldn't recover.

Then Lon, Joe, and Bill went by Tom Hudgins' house in Danbury to pick him up and take him to Oyster Creek to see about his folks. He had not heard that his parents had been badly hurt. They all spent most of the day down there. Aunt Emma died from her injuries. The boy was buried in the Velasco cemetery. Tom stayed on for a while to help out, and since there were plenty of family and friends to take care of things down there, Lon and the boys came on back home.

Getting a new roof on the house came first, and there was lots of cleaning up to do. We were named the heaviest losers by the storm in the community, but would accept none of the relief money sent in for storm sufferers. We could adequately handle our problems. We did appreciate sympathy and visits from concerned people. We needed that sort of cheering. Ruby came home and the boys stayed until we were comfortably housed again. We lost some of our favorite trees.

In following years when other storms came, younger members of the family would take over and move Lon and I to secure quarters - several times to Houston, and once to the Danbury schoolhouse. We were at Joe's in Houston during the historic Carla storm. (There is a book about it). To the present, it was our last bad storm.

GOLDEN WEDDING

In 1951 Lon and I were persuaded by our children to celebrate our fiftieth wedding anniversary. Ella began the festivities by taking us on a trip through part of Texas, with a special stop at Willis, where Lon went his one year to college. He didn't know where we were until he heard Ella enquiring at a service station about the location of the old Willis College. Someone told us to go see Mr. Scrap, who had always lived around Willis. We found the place and a sweet old lady made us welcome. A man's picture hanging on the wall looked familiar. She said he was from our part of Texas - Quintana. He was Captain Albert Bowers, whom she had married after the death of his first wife, Emma Seaborn. Mrs. Bowers was now a widow living with her brother, Mr. Scrap. He had gone to the college, but it closed so long ago that very few in the town remembered anything about it. He didn't remember Lon or Captain Addison who was in the school with Lon, both being from the Surfside area. But Mr. Scrap and Lon were able to reminisce concerning some of the former college teachers.

While we were having lunch at a Willis cafe that day, we were discussing Lon's brief stay at the college. A middle-aged lady sitting nearby spoke, saying, "I know a man that went to Willis College. He lives in Brazoria County on the Darrington Plantation."

Ella got his name, and later in Angleton, had a chance to talk to him about the incident. Apparently, he and Lon had not known each other at the college.

The main Anniversary observance was held at the American Legion Hall in Danbury. Grandson (and Baptist minister) Joe Brumbelow performed the ceremony over for us. Two people were present who were at our original wedding - my sister, Amelia Meridith, and her daughter, Lorene Wright.

Ten years later, Lon and I and family members observed our sixtieth wedding anniversary in our home in Danbury. We lived together there two more years, when death separated us - after sixty two years.

Vida stayed with me for two days after the funeral, but had to return to the hospital in Port Lavaca, where she was nursing. Of course other family members were near and dropping in. But jobs and family obligations made it impossible for any of them to be with me constantly or permanently. I was worried about my future since my hearing difficulty made telephone communication next to impossible for me. I knew I couldn't stay on the place alone. That matter had already been settled in the minds of Ruby and Arsdell. They offered me a room and said they wanted me to come and live with them. So that was settled.

Two years later Ruby and Arsdell made plans (including me) for an October trip through several southern states with a few days' visit with some of my distant relatives in Virginia. Along the way, we saw people harvesting cotton, corn, sweet potatoes, peanuts, sugar cane, pumpkins, tobacco, and finally, gathering apples. Of course, we bought apples, ribbon cane syrup, and fresh, stone-ground meal to bring home.

As we were planning to head homeward from Virginia, we were watching reports of a storm off the Atlantic coast. We thought we had outflanked it, but it headed us off on the Blue Ridge Parkway. Trees were broken off along the highway, and one huge tree was uprooted and flung across the road. Long lines of traffic, going both ways, were held up until help could be called. It was soon cleared with axes, saws, and moving equipment. (My first storm on a mountain highway, but it wasn't so bad).

In 1968, Ella, Lonna, and I were planning a trip to South Dakota, through the Bad Lands and the Black Hills. We found that Vida could get away from her job for a while, so we included her too. It was fun all the way. We saw lots of buffalo, elk, deer, antelope, wild turkeys, and pheasants. We went to a wedding in South Dakota, shopped in Montana, and spent two days on a sheep ranch in Wyoming with some of the finest people in the world.

They were kinfolks of Lonna's husband.

At one point we were held up on the road by a bunch of burros that blocked the road and made us stop. We fed them all the crackers, chips, and cookies we had. Finally, another came up going the opposite direction. It had children in it who wanted to feed the burros, so the little scamps deserted us and we made our escape.

Along with seeing all the attractions tourists look for when they travel, we visited some friends in Nebraska for a day and night.

At one stop along the way, a middle-aged man hearing one of the group mention that it was my ninety second birthday, came over to congratulate me, gave me a dollar, and kissed me. He said, "You are the first ninety two year old lady I ever kissed." His wife gave me an autographed card. I have lost the card, spent the dollar, and forgotten what they looked like.

In 1969, I went again to Virginia with Ella, Vida and her nursing friend, Mrs. Hood. We did almost the same things I did with Ruby four years before, except Ella caught fish in the Atlantic Ocean. We toured Norfolk, cruised on a big river boat, and saw the sights from that vantage point. The Captain gave me an autographed card, saying I was the oldest lady ever to ride his boat.

Leaving Virginia, we visited Natural Bridge. We saw everything in that area in a few hours, ate a pancake supper, and found rooms for the night. We drove some miles on the Blue Ridge Parkway. The next place of much interest to us was Stone Mountain in Georgia. I had been there before, but the others hadn't. Something new was the Chimes of the Stone Mountain Bells. There was also a big museum. I am glad that I made the trip, but I wouldn't want to repeat it ever.

I am thankful that I have the experiences of all these years to look back upon, and that I can enjoy (most of) them in retrospect. I am thankful that I have been able to recall and record those that have impressed me most.

At the same time, I am aware that "the good old days" are right now; And that "right now" and the years (?) ahead are what I must make the most of.

ADDENDUM, MAY 26, 1976

The One Hundredth Anniversary Of My Birth Date

Well, some six or seven years ago when I put away my pen and folded my papers, I didn't fold my hands. At that time I did note, optimistically, that I was moving on "into the years (?) ahead." Reading, watching news on TV, and visiting with kinfolks and friends, have kept me up to date on world and local events. The Good Lord and my doctor (with my cooperation) have kept my body serving me well - so well, in fact, that I still make up my own bed, and handle most of the day-to-day matters of my personal care. Until Ruby bought a dishwasher about a year ago (to humor a stubbornly infected finger), I helped with cleaning the dishes.

Now, I have reached a notable milestone. I was born during my Country's centennial year, and have seen it through its second hundred years. As it celebrates its bicentennial anniversary, I join in with my centennial observance.

WATCH FOR THE NEXT ADDENDUM!

Addie Hudgins Follett

Addie Hudgins Follett