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## **CHAPTER V**

### **LIFE ON THE PLAINS**

Though social and economic developments were moving rapidly for much of the United States in the decades of the 1880s and 1890s, events in middle Tennessee - were still in a slow mode. The vast, emigration to the Northeast and Middle West had not really effected the rural state of Tennessee. Where as much of the country experienced "progress" in factories, mining, and railroading, it had yet to arrive in Franklin County.

While the good and ill of industrialization set the pace in much of the country, at least there was little first hand experience with child labor, sweat shops, unions and strikes in Decherd and Winchester. Instead, the rural people were trying with all their might to "get ahead." Getting ahead meant putting in a crop without having to borrow at the bank. It meant owning some land you could call your own. It meant having a secure house, warm in winter, open to the breezes of summer, and big enough for a fast growing family. It meant working hard so that your children could get more than a rudimentary education. In Franklin County it was tough to get ahead!

With babies arriving every other year, Delly and Betty were striving, but not getting ahead. Much as they both valued farm life, they simply could not make it as farmers without enough land of their own. Delly got a public job in Decherd as operator of the coal loading chute, loading all trains that stopped in Decherd with coal and water. His family moved to Decherd living as "town people" with a garden and the kind of livestock that was tolerated there, namely chickens, pigs and two milk cows, Delly felt the waste of having strong sturdy sons with no more to do than go to school and do chores around the house. Letters from Uncle Joe Ikard described the opportunities for young men in Indian Territory (later, the state of

Oklahoma). There land could sometimes be acquired by lottery, or homesteading and even when it was bought, it cost very little. Dinner conversation revolved about what the family might accomplish with such a start. It was tempting; it was exciting!

The event that forced the decision to leave dear old Tennessee came when the oldest son Mark, a tall strapping youth of 16, sought a job for himself. He saddled up his horse, riding away a dawn, not returning before dark. When he did arrive, his story was that he had gone to the independently-owned coal mine up the mountain and been hired as a miner. He had found a family living nearby that would board him, but he would have to sleep in the barn.

The usual agreeable and merry Betty balked at this. No son of hers was to work in the mine. Betty's ultimatum provoked a storm. All her sons demanded to know what they were to do about jobs if they could not work in the mines. There were no job opportunities in Decherd or Winchester. The answer was obvious, The Ikards should move to Indian Territory, get some land and be farmers.

It says something about life in the Ikard family that even in 1904, everyone had a voice in family decisions. Betty had laid down the law about mining. Her sturdy sons insisted on plans that would give them an honorable future. I expect that Delly was delighted with the turn of events. Certainly every son big enough to voice his opinions at the table felt that farming was the most noble of occupations and was determined that he would be a successful farmer. These fellows never deviated from this ideal, although one had to hold a public job in order to support a farm, the preference was to till the soil. That meant having one's own land was essential.

It was late fall when the Ikards decided to move to Indian Territory in the spring of 1905. That winter, all the talk was about Indians, buffalo, grassland, cowboys and working new land. Delly was a modern man who believed in making the most of science and inventions. No wonder that he chose to move his large family by train. Why there was a train to Chickasha (don't you just love to say that word?) that was only a few miles from Uncle Joe and Uncle Jesse. The Ikard household that never was quiet was unusually noisy that winter. Oh, the dreams!

When April of 1905 arrived, brave Delly and Betty loaded their belongings, nine children, two dogs and perhaps farm animals on a freight car in Decherd and set out for a new life. The whistle of the train moaned a goodbye to the familiar and " here we come" to adventure.

At that time Mark was 17, Maggie, 16, Don, 14, Jim, 12, George, 11, Henry, 9, Luther, 6, Jesse, 4 and Herbert, 3. A picture on page 186 shows the family just before they left Decherd. All the children had come through infancy hale and hearty except Sarah Elizabeth or "Lizzy" who had been born in 1897, after Henry. She died at two years of pneumonia, a killer at that time. With heavy hearts her family buried

her in the Ikard cemetery just across the road from the house that Elijah Harrison Ikard had built for his first bride, Elizabeth Overton Rowe.

There were no doctors in the area of Indian Territory where they were going. How was Betty to deal with childhood diseases and with the inevitable accidents for such active children as hers? She was self reliant and trusted in God to do for her what she could not do for herself. A list of the contents of her medicine cabinet is on page of this book, and a list of treatments she used in the early days of the 20th century is on page 226.

It was a demanding time. Delly was able to buyout a homesteader who had won 80 acres at a land lottery. But Delly had already planted a crop on leased land north of Cyril, the old Looking Glass pasture, and was required to live on land to be homesteaded. Delly, Mark, Don, and Jim moved into a dugout on the homestead. They planted a crop, fenced the place and started to build a house. Betty, Maggie and the younger six children tended the crop on the leased land and made a good harvest. On page 189 is a picture of the house that Delly and the boys built. The family stands proudly in front.

In Caddo County there was a scarcity of farmers in 1906 and Delly hoped to buy adjoining land, but concern for the plains Indians by the government brought about assigning all land in the area to living Indians. Indians longed for the freedom of nomadic living and refused to farm. Instead, they leased their holding to land hungry farmers. Delly and his sons leased several sections (one mile square, 640 acres) nearby, farming and ranching. The land north of Cyril was used for cattle and horses with an Ikard stable providing transportation for people in the vicinity. Caring for horses delighted his sons.

How exciting this life was! Though the work was endless, the Ikards knew how to play. The neighbors were good people willing to help in any endeavor. In Cyril there was Doctor Black. Though his training was minimal, it was comforting to Betty to know that some help was nearby. The Ikard boys were big, jovial and how they loved to sing (all were tenors) and dance. They were welcome at social occasions.

Delly was the man to see when a job had to be done. he could deliver a strong and capable crew. When the Frisco Railroad was extended from Chickasha to Lawton, Delly's boys helped lay the track. The Ikards had come a long way with the railroad.

Delly began a series of improvements on his and Betty's farm. The homesteader's shallow well with a hand pump was not adequate for a large family with considerable livestock. So a deep well was drilled yielding plenty of water. The windmill on that hill could pump water around the clock. But there was a problem. Much of the subsurface of this area is gypsum rock, and water that filters through gypsum takes

on the taste of gypsum not at all pleasant. No treatment made it palatable for the family, yet the farm animals thrived on it.

Again Delly turned to the best technology of the day to solve the water problem. The system depended on a pear-shaped cistern of reinforced concrete that was 15 feet deep and 10 feet across the bottom. The cover had a trap door allowing entrance for infrequent cleaning. Gutters on the house delivered sweet rainwater into a filter box that was layered with clean sand, charcoal and gravel. It was tightly sealed so that only pure water went into the cistern. Even the pump was of the latest design. Copper cups were linked to bring water to the spout when the handle on the right side was cranked. The spout was covered to keep any bugs from entering the system. Oh, the luxury of delivering pure sweet water at will! Neighbors from all around come to admire and imitate this useful idea.

The house that Delly and the boys built was an impressive structure for its time (1906-1907). Delly's days of carpentering in Franklin County paid enormously. He supervised the construction of a house able to withstand the wind and other elements. The upstairs was one large dormitory with five double beds for the boys.

Windows on the north and south sides provided light and ventilation for the long hot summers. A balcony on the east side was also used for summer sleeping. As any Oklahoma kid born before air conditioning can tell you; sleeping under the cloudless, star filled skies is a special treat.

The boys descended the stairs to the kitchen, which really was the heart of the house. Here, it is reported, Betty made 100 biscuits three times a day for her hungry brood. The elongated wooden bread bowl that had belonged to her mother, Mary Banks Gillaim, wore to smoothness with daily use.

The legend of this bread bowl has been told in a previous chapter. Mary's father made it for a wedding gift for Mary and William in August of 1858. When a Union officer found honey in the bowl, he confiscated it for his hungry men. Mary pitched such a fit that he returned the empty bowl. Now Betty put it to good use daily.

A combination wood/coal stove dominated the kitchen and provided heat for outsize pots and skillets. A large copper pot that covered two burners did multiple jobs, including holding hot water for the laundry as well as the slow cook down of apple butter in the late fall. Crocks of various sizes were scattered about the kitchen and the large work and storage room.

A door from the porch led into the living room, and from it the door opened into the parents room. Mae Ikard Hicks described the contents and aromas of the large work/storage room on the northwest side of the house. Here the brothers hung their overcoats, jackets and overalls. In a disorderly heap were leather and rubber

boots, shoes, and dirty clothes that came from the skin out. The meticulous Mae deplored the odor of the heap.

But even more, she was repulsed by the area of the room that was the heart of the milk and cream business that provided much appreciated ready cash and steady income for the Ikards. Numerous buckets came twice a day from the barn filled with warm milk. When the boys finished milking, Mae unwillingly took over the task of separating cream from milk.

First each bucket must be emptied through a strainer into the large bowl at the top of the separator. A handle connected to the gears must be turned rapidly to provide the centrifugal force to separate cream from milk. The gears must always be well lubricated to reach the high RPM required. The gears were black, somewhat drippy, ugly and smelly.

The sound of separating began with a low rrrroar, gaining in intensity as the handle turned ever faster until it reached a high pitched scream. It diminished between each bucket of milk delivered through the strainer, but had to increase to the scream again before the process could continue. This hard and lengthy job had to be done twice a day, followed by the washing and scalding of the bowl and working inner parts of the separator as well as the many buckets that came from the barn. Mae contends that the aromas of the hot milk and the warm grease of the gears was a repugnant combination to her.

The skim milk was the basis of slop for the hogs. Vegetable peelings and scraps from the table joined the skim milk providing nutrition for several pigs. The entire process was a turn off to Mae.

Near the kitchen door was an oversize laundry tub that was used on Saturday for baths. Heated water from a teakettle added to cistern water made the temperature acceptable. The children complained about the lye soap that Betty frugally made, so she relented and purchased castile soap that had a pleasant color and aroma.

Shelves held the larder that come from the cellar. Fruits and vegetables were canned in half-gallon jars. Every two or three days these shelves must be replenished. It is hard to imagine the quantities of food required for so large a family of mostly teen age boys.

A large storage cabinet held the peach peeler, sausage grinder, lard press, pressure cooker and irons. Mae was petrified of the pressure cooker, a modern invention that enhanced food preservation, but had limited tolerance for the heat required to seal the jars airtight. It hissed, popped and screamed when it got too hot, a threatening phenomena to a young girl.

Yet the objects most scorned by Mae's sensitive nose were the two incubators that came from the barn in the spring allowing Betty to hatch dozens of baby chickens.

The boxlike structure was about three feet square with several trays each holding 150 fertile eggs. The incubator was heated by a kerosene heater. As the chicks hatched they were removed from the trays to a warmed box until they could go to the chicken yard. The heat from the kerosene reflected on the cracking eggs made an odor that Mae wanted to get away from. "Oh, how those baby chicks smelled," she lamented.

All the knives, cutting board and other tools for butchering hogs and beef cattle were stored in this room as well as the resultant smoked hams and sides of bacon.

An immense toolbox held various tools: hammers, saws, axes and hardware.

Another box held stove polish, shoe polish, saddle soap and other necessities.

A door opened from the workroom to the backyard. With heavy traffic from many workmen, and the never ending wind, dust and mud continually littered the floor. Like the wind, sweeping was never ending.

In the yard the trusty windmill whirred away, rhythmically pumping water into the large stock tank. A horizontal vane kept the circular sails turned into the wind for maximum efficiency. Naughty, daring, tom-boy Mae often climbed to the top of the frame of the windmill to catch the best breeze, to get a better view of the surrounding countryside and to aggravate her father. Because it was rather risky, he commanded her to come down, which she did when she was good and ready.

As the boys matured and began to court the girls, Delly knew his days of bossing a crew of free laborers would come to an end. Sometime between 1915-1918 Delly bought a huge Sampson tractor, It was a noisy monster that was difficult to crank and even more difficult to keep running. Only Jess could do that. Jess, 15 at the time was the most mechanically inclined son, so he went with Delly to bring " Old Sampson" home.

Dinner conversation now was how they would modify the equipment they presently owned to use Sampson 's power. The Ikards had been successfully growing wheat for several years, and had a large turning plow, a big disk plow, a spike harrow and a more than adequate grain drill. They also had a late model wheat cutter that cut and tied bundles in one operation, some called it a "Binder." The fellows dreamed of owning a threshing machine, a very costly piece of equipment but capable of earning a pretty penny for the operator. By pooling their savings, even with a bank loan the Ikard boys could not swing the deal.

So Delly went into the community seeking investors for the harvester. Dr. Black, a good friend by now, was one of the investors. The thresher arrived in time for harvest. That year the entire wheat crop was grown and harvested with Sampson's power. With nine boys, three to a wagon, two to pitch bundles and one to neatly

stack them, the Ikards could custom cut and harvest wheat for all the neighbors. Two pictures of "Old " Sampson," the thresher and crews are on page 190. -

Threshing was a big deal for a farm family. After dark one day, the threshing machine arrived in the wheat field pulled by the tractor. By early daylight, the crew of half a dozen wagons entered the field and began to toss bundles of grain into the wagons. The tractor fired up, and before the sun rose, the threshing machine was gobbling up the bundles, spitting out straw. At intervals it disgorged the precious grain into wagons that took it to a storage area until it could be marketed. Until 12 noon there was never a lull. Some lucky kid got the desirable job of delivering ice water and tea by horseback to the crew. He was the water boy. This was a job that I coveted when my dad was the farmer.

It was the custom that the farmer's wife, with the help of friends and family prepared "dinner" for the dusty and hungry crew. Pride dictated that the food would not only be bountiful. but delicious. This, of course, was before the days of freezers, so the housewife could not cook ahead of time to lessen the stress of the day. The day before "threshing," the lady made pies and cakes. By dawn of that day, women friends and family also arrived, and the serious cooking began. A huge roast went into the oven early. Someone killed a half dozen fryers, dressed them and began the frying. Later another person sliced center slices of ham. Any number of vegetables were picked from the garden and readied for the stove. Talk about a hot kitchen!

Yet the glory of setting such a magnificent table paid honor to the lady of the house and her friends. The hostess would in turn help them when the thresher came to their farm. After the enormous meal, the satiated crew took a little rest in the shade of trees or the house while the women began the horrendous task of washing up the dishes and cleaning the kitchen. They were some tired when the work was done.

Often it was dark when a strange quiet descended on the field. Slowly the tractor pulled the thresher from the shorn grain field to the neighboring farm for yet another day of harvesting. Throughout the day there had been lots of joshing and joking in the field and in the kitchen. Everyone hoped that the price of wheat would be good, for that meant a prosperous year. Neighbors had shared work that was satisfying and fun.

Two more children were born to Betty and Delly in Oklahoma. A son was born on March 31, 1907 the year that Indian Territory became a state, so Betty named him Fred Oklahoma. He was a big boned child on whom Delly doted. Then on May 31, 1910 Betty gave birth to her 12th child. After all those boys she had another daughter.

She named her Mary Tennessee for Delly's well loved mother. This girl, whom they called Mae, was very unlike her gentle sister Maggie. She was a match for the rowdy ways of her brothers. Delly said that Betty was inclined to indulge "her baby." Delly hoped that this child would be like Maggie, but was he ever disappointed!

Joe Mark, the oldest son was 27 and getting married to Lavell Frances Carothers when the Ikards got big time into wheat harvesting. Mark was a tall and very handsome young man who had assumed responsibility as most first children must. He had set a good example for his younger brothers and taught them the skills of farming, as well as how to charm the ladies. He did not disappoint the demanding Delly. Lavell, who came from Nashville, Tennessee, and Mark were an attractive and industrious couple who seemed destined to make their place among the young people farming and ranching in the Cyril area. All were bringing civilization to the plains.

Their first child, Irene, was born April 9, 1917. Soon another child was on the way. On July 11, 1918, another daughter, Mildred Lee (named for the beloved sister Maggie Lee) was born. But dreadful misfortune struck. The able Mark became mysteriously ill. He could function neither physically nor mentally as in the past. Dr. Black was unable to diagnose the problem. But before Mark died on June 14, 1919, his illness was diagnosed as a brain tumor. No one was doing brain surgery in Oklahoma at that time, so there was no hope for this promising young man.

Lavell remarried in later years and had more children. Irene married Ernest Arrowwood on May 4, 1940, and had four children. Mildred married Raymond J. O'Day on March 17, 1948, and had one daughter. Irene died in Lawton some time in the 1980s. Mildred, now a widow, lives in Tuscon, Arizona.

Delly's and Betty's second child was the gentle Maggie Lee. She was for twenty years, except for the two short years of her sister Elizabeth's life, the only girl in the family. I expect she lamented that fact. One can imagine the laundry for two adults and ten kids, the cooking and cleaning as well as sewing, gardening and canning necessary to keep such a household going.

Maggie went to the Ikard school near Alto and the school in Decherd for the short time the Ikards lived there. No one was surprised that she was a good student, but the burdens of the busy household had to be born by Betty and her competent daughter. At 13, Maggie had all the formal schooling she would get. A life of hard work awaited her.

After the move to Oklahoma, she met Eugene Hamilton the year the Ikards lived and made a crop in Grady County, near Uncle Joe in Tuttle and Uncle Jesse near the Fairwell community. She was a catch! Even features complimented her oval face. Her dark eyes looked kindly on a world she felt bound to serve rather than

challenge. At 20 she was a master housekeeper, an accomplished seamstress and a capable manager. In addition, she was highly creative, turning simple raw materials into useful and attractive clothing and items for the home.

Gene's parents came from Missouri. They took part in the Oklahoma Land Rush and got a homestead in Grady County. Gene was 15 at the time. The Hamiltons must have been in the area in 1905 when the Ikards arrived. Among Maggie's memorabilia is a valentine that Gene sent her in February of 1909. At any rate, courtship followed, and they were married September 9, 1909, in Cyril. The young couple lived in Cyril for about four years. Their first child, Marvin Albert, was born there July 18, 1910.

Then they bought an 80-acre farm east of Cement and moved by wagon over very rough roads to their new home in February of 1914. Their daughter Velma Ada (perhaps for her beautiful Aunt Ada, the wife of Uncle Jesse who lived in the vicinity) was born on March 1, 1914. During the next 20 years, Gene did some farming and worked for Oklahoma Natural Gas Company. On July 14, 1919, their daughter Viola was born.

Maggie made a big garden, kept bees, raised geese and guineas as well as chickens, filled her cellar with fruits and vegetables, and dressed her family well. Still they did not prosper. For a time Gene had a sorghum mill, the sort of crude arrangement where a mule goes around and around crushing the canes yielding liquid that is cooked down into syrup. My family bought this syrup regularly, and Alta, my mother, made the best cakes of the Depression years with that syrup. Maggie and Gene sent their son Marvin to Oklahoma State University. On the 22nd of December, 1933, Velma married James Ralph Boswell.

Because Viola was near my age and a great friend, I often visited the Hamiltons. Even a kid had to admire the persistence and resourcefulness of Aunt Maggie. She still did laundry the old way; scrub soil spots on a rub board with lye soap, boil in a big black pot, then rinse, wringing by hand, hang out for the Oklahoma wind to dry, then unpin, fold and moisten all the garments and linens that had to be ironed the next day. She used irons heated on her stove for that.

As the Depression deepened, Gene was laid off at the gas company. Because his land was not particularly productive, and because of very low prices for crops, he lost the farm. The Hamiltons moved to Chickasha, where Gene had a stroke in 1941. Maggie tended him and kept a job also. He died in 1944. The jobs she could get were very stressful. For several years she lived with Velma. When Jim and Velma moved to Missouri, Maggie moved to Lawton to be near her daughter Viola who had married J.D. Golden on July 14, 1941.

In 1968, Maggie got mumps and died in the hospital in Lawton.

Don Carl was the third of Delly's and Betty's children. He was tall, lean, with very good features, yet he did not smile much. Perhaps he found competing with his older brother Mark serious business. He attended the Ikard school, the school in Decherd and the Fairview school in Grady County in Indian Territory before the family located near Cyril. There he was one of the big boys at Caddo Pride School where his father, Delly, was chairman of the School Board. Perhaps he was a promising student because his parents sent him to a college preparatory school in Valpariso, Indiana; the only child that the Ikards offered more than a rudimentary education .

It was a disappointment. Don got homesick. He found the work too hard (Caddo Pride had not prepared him for this), so after a few months, he returned to Cyril. Here he resumed labor in the fields as his brothers did and used his leisure to court the girls – a worthy use of time to the minds of his siblings.

He married Rilla Robertson on April 23, 1916. The wedding took place at the home of the bride's parents, Marion and Rose Robertson, who lived south of Cement. The Reverend J.C. Earl, then a Methodist, performed the ceremony. Her parents were "Sooners" who got no homestead and had to move from place to place to find land to farm. Rilla was a sweet compliant girl who got along with everyone. Don had no problem being the head of his family. Rilla had attended Fairview School and, later on, Caddo Pride, so Don may have known her for sometime.

Being married, Don was not inclined to join the service when World War I began. Though he was called up to Oklahoma City for a physical, he was never inducted. Instead, he began acquiring the necessary equipment and livestock for farming; living south and east of Cyril. He liked horses and he was sought out for the spotted ponies and other riding horses he bred and sold.

Farming suited Don so well he never wanted a public job. To his disadvantage, he never was able to own the land he cultivated, but had to lease from an Indian owner. Though he was knowledgeable about horses, during his maturity, cars and tractors did the work of animals and dealing in horses became less profitable. He only left the farm when a heart attack disabled him in 1958. Rilla seemed content as a farmer's wife, a trait she passed on to their two daughters.

The Don Ikards were religious people, attending the Baptist church regularly and firmly disciplining their three children. Don often sang in the choir with gusto, his tenor rising above the timid voices about him.

Don's and Rilla's first child, Carl Elwood Ikard was born April 1, 1918. He was a small child with red hair and the fair skin of many of the Ikards in Tennessee. From his demanding father, Carl learned to do every job on the farm, and he liked it. Particularly, he liked the spotted pony that his dad gave him for doing chores,

running errands and just having a good time as a farm boy. Reba Rilla was born December 5, 1923. Wanda Joan arrived November 18, 1931. Don had mellowed over the years; he indulged his tiny daughter and reveled in her company.

Like numerous Ikards, Don suffered a stroke in 1957 from which he never fully recovered. He and Rilla had a traditional farm sale in 1958 and moved to Cyril. He died January 13, 1962.

James Franklin Ikard was the fourth of Delly's and Betty's children. He was named for Delly's brother Frank. The similarities and differences of Jim and his Uncle Frank are noteworthy. The younger James Franklin was big, tall, barrel-chested, quite in contrast to Uncle Frank's spare, lean frame. Jim had a broad face, blue eyes and a high forehead. He had a sort of rolling gait that would appear that he had spent many a year on the decks of rolling ships. Not so. Instead, he spent many hours in the saddle over a period of years. I could pick out my Uncle Jim in a crowd, even with his back turned. His walk was his identification.

But there was a similarity with his Uncle Frank. both men farmed just to make a living for their families; their real passion was in leisure activities out of doors. Uncle Frank laid by his crops early in the season so he could devote himself to hunting and fishing. In a far different setting, Jim also paid his dues to farming, growing wheat and row crops and keeping a herd of cattle, but he was best known for his skills at fishing the ponds and holes in shallow rivers before lakes were formed by dams in the area. Jim was a wolf hunter, and he kept a yard full of wolf hounds. Mae said that Jim resembled the character "Hoss" in the long running TV series Bonanza. Jim loved beautiful horses and always had several in the pasture. He was an accomplished horseman as were all his brothers.

And like his brothers, he attended the Ikard School, the school in Decherd and Caddo Pride in Caddo County. He didn't care for the classroom, yet six of his seven children are college graduates, some with postgraduate degrees. When Delly's and Betty's children were anticipating the move from Tennessee to Indian Territory, it was the 11 year old Jim who expressed concern that the buffalo might be gone by the time the Ikards arrived on the plains. He wasn't far from right. Clearly Jim had visions of hunting in wild open country. He had another quality of natural outdoorsmen, being an excellent teller of stories. Jim was as strong as he was big. Delly and others often called on Jim when a heavy job presented itself.

Jim married Helen Lydia Massey, the only daughter of Asa and Rana Elixia Ball Massey on December 8, 1915. Helen had gone to school in a rural school in Comanche County. She started high school in Fletcher, but the daily horseback ride proved too much for her. She passed a proficiency test that certified her to teach, but instead, she decided to marry Jim. He brought his bride to live for a time in his

parents' home. It was a startling experience for Helen who had grown up in the relatively quiet household of two children.

She told her children of spending her wedding night at the Masseys and having breakfast that her mother served at the table with a white tablecloth and cloth napkins, all properly set with butter in a butter dish and jelly in a crystal bowl. The tone of conversation was soft and mannerly.

The next day she and Jim moved into the Ikard house. There the morning began with Delly's robust wake up for his crew. Betty was glad to have another woman in the kitchen (Mae was only 5 and Maggie was married by now). Helen was handed an oversize skillet and put to work. The very large family sat an oilcloth covered table, with plenty of substantial food served in odd pieces of dish ware and crockery. The blessing was the only quiet time during the meal. Delly dealt out the orders for the day, his sons having plenty to say about how it was to be accomplished. One can easily understand the culture shock that Helen experienced in the household she had joined.

Jim and Helen had a large family. Letitia Ann was born September 11, 1916, Iva Marie, March 21, 1919, James Asa, July 26, 1921, Betty Louwanna, February 26, 1924, Helen Bernice, January 16, 1927, Dorothy Nadine, December 11, 1932, and Joyce Evelyn, June 5, 1935. They were and have been a close-knit family and today have their own "Jim and Helen" reunion each year before joining the cousins for the biennial Ikard reunion.

If Jim seemed not to like school, his children did. They did not let the inconvenience of living on a farm keep them from being involved in numerous school activities. They loved music and sang in quartets and glee clubs as well as solos. All were sturdy and agile, excelling in sports, and they held their own in academics. Bernice, Dorothy and Joyce played in the band.

The Jim Ikards worshiped at the Christian Church in Cyril. It was considered in Cyril to be a tad more refined than the Baptist church where Grandma Betty and most of the other Ikards attended. Only on Mother's Day did Uncle Jim worship with the Baptists, and that was to honor Betty whose sons filled the choir that day. I loved those services. Grandma sat quietly in the congregation while all one could hear from the choir was the robust harmony of half a dozen tenors.

In the 1960s, Jim and Helen retired and were able to travel about visiting their children and grandchildren. Most years the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays were celebrated with the children in Oklahoma. Then they went to Miami, Florida and visited with Bernice and her family for the remainder of the winter. Jim entertained the Deeds girls with "Indian" stories. Helen indulged the family with pastries and yeast breads. It was a treasured time for three generations.

When Jim and Helen sold out the farm, they bought the house that Delly and Betty had lived in for their last years. Helen 's health was the first to fail. She suffered a stroke. When Jim could no longer care for her, they both went to a nursing home. First they were in Anadarko and then at the Baptist Retirement Home in Oklahoma City. Jim could be seen pushing Helen 's wheel chair about the grounds; they were obviously a devoted couple. Helen died on December 5, 1975; Jim followed her on July 1. 1980.

It is interesting to note that Jim lived to the ripest old age of any of his siblings. Perhaps that was because he took the time to pursue his interests of hunting and fishing instead of being a workaholic.

George Washington (a true patriot) was the fifth of the Ikard children. He was born on October 2, 1894, near Alto. He followed his brothers to school and in the fields. At 10, he was a large child whose enthusiasm ran high as his family planned the trip West.

Much as he loved horses, he just knew that he would be a cowboy. He often raced through the streets. Once his horse stumbled on the railroad track in Decherd throwing him forward with great force. He got up with a bloody face and all his front teeth hanging loose. Betty got him to a doctor who took the blunt end of a pocket knife and gently tapped each tooth back into its place in his gums. Those teeth lasted until middle age for George.

In Oklahoma, when Delly took the older boys to live in the dugout on the homestead while Betty and the young ones cultivated and harvested the crops on the lease north of Cyril, George at 12 was the leader. He always remained close to his mother, and was perhaps the only son who liked to help Betty in the kitchen.

Along with Jesse and Fred, George relished the music that was a part of daily living. He loved hymns and, the popular tunes of the day, but most of all the cowboy songs, the mournful as well as the lively. I expect the Ikard children contributed much to the music at Caddo Pride.

The Ikard boys made quite a splash at social events, being big, good looking, full of fun and jokes, musical and capable of thunderous dancing. A hostess knew she would have plenty of young men when she invited the Ikards. They certainly livened up a party, but oh, how they devoured the goodies.

George learned to maintain farm equipment from his dad and brothers. He could fix most anything with bailing wire. He loved the hard work of working with horses, mules and cattle, and was helpful in buying and selling livestock. It was uncanny how close he could guess the weight of an animal. As a farmer, he bought and sold mostly mules.

George had already acquired some livestock and farm equipment when the United States was drawn into World War I. He also had a fiancée, Alta May Witten. Alta's parents had six daughters and their father, Link Witten was extremely strict about who could come courting. Yet he took a liking to George the first time he showed up at a Witten "play party", and George had no problems in courting Alta. In fact, he often brought younger brothers when he called which pleased Alta's sisters. The Witten girls were attractive and pleasant-mannered, who helped their mother serve tasty meals and yummy deserts.

In the early days of WWI, George volunteered. He had choices and chose to serve in the Sanitary Train of the Army. That was an outfit that picked up the dead and wounded on the battlefield. It would be dangerous and heart-rending duty, but George had no taste for artillery, rifles and bayonets. He trained at Camp Bowie near Fort Worth, Texas. As he waited in New York for transportation to France, he bought a ring for Alta. Before he left, the ring came back. Alta said it turned her finger green. George had been taken by a slick Yankee. As his troop ship, The Great Northern, passed the Statue of Liberty on its way into the Atlantic, George tossed the worthless ring into the Hudson River.

His letters from France tell of the good things in a French village. He liked the food and wine." Sunny France", he called the place. For weeks he was at the front, but he wrote nothing of the grim side of the war. Nor did he tell war stories to his family after he returned.

Once the Armistice was signed, he was eager to come home. There simply were not enough ships to get the soldiers home quickly. He complained about this. Once he and some buddies were granted a furlough to go to the French Alps. He wrote glowing accounts of the beauty of the mountains.

Mail was delivered on an erratic basis, which was a pain to George. When he failed to hear from Alta for several weeks, he angrily broke the engagement. Later when a stack of letters arrived from Alta on the same day, he regretted his petulance.

In June of 1919, George was discharged from the U.S. Army and hurried home. Sadly, his brother Mark had just died. In time he contacted Alta and made a date. He borrowed his dad's Ford to take Alta to the motion picture show in Fletcher. On the way home, about a half mile from the Witten's home, the car quit and could not be started. This gave George the opportunity to express his regret and make sincere apologies to Alta. The engagement got patched up, and a date was set for the wedding. They walked the rest of the way home and made their big announcement to the Witten's. A host of Wittens and Ikards attended the wedding at Link's and Nannie's house on August 31, 1919. Alta made her white satin wedding dress. George looks very sober in the wedding photograph. Such responsibilities!

The livestock and farm equipment that George sold for low prices when he went into the Army, were costly to buy back, George leased a farm, north of his parents home. Alta helped George in the fields, grew chickens, sold butter and eggs and with much thrift stretched their dollars.

George's and Alta's first child, Mildred, was born August 7, 1920. George found that he needed more income than the farm provided. He found a job with a pipeline company in Grady County. A second child, George Witten lcard was born January 28, 1923. George was not content not to be farming, so the young couple got a lease in Comanche county near the Wittens. A second son, Gerald Kenneth, was born February 29, 1928.

Still the farm would not provide an adequate living. This time George got a job at the Anderson-Pritchard Oil Refinery in Cyril, but he kept the lease. For the years the children were growing up, George held two jobs. He worked alternating shifts at the refinery, then went to work the soil. Only a man of great stamina and determination could tolerate those hours and the lack of sleep.

When the Depression of the thirties came, George was in an enviable position of having a steady income. When the drought of the thirties turned the landscape to desert, the steady refinery income paid the farm expenses.

Meantime, George, a most affectionate man, enjoyed his family life. His kids had the advantage of having horses which put them among the elite of Cyril. His children learned to do all the jobs on the farm. One could hear the singing voice of a son above the noise of the tractor as they took turns plowing through the night. George treated his sons like men and for the most part they behaved like men.

Jesse Edward lcard Jr. came to live with the George lkards as an adolescent. Both his parents had died, and being a charming child, just about everyone in the family wanted him. For several years Jesse lived first with one then another of his parents' siblings. When he come to George's house, he didn't leave until he finished school and joined the Navy. He was a wonderful addition to the family of three children. Gerald was so happy to have a brother close to his age. He and Jesse became inseparable.

When the United States entered World War II in 1941, George again had the urge to serve his country. He was 47 years old and not likely to be accepted by a branch of the service, but he was healthy, strong and skillful and got a job with the Corps of Engineers building an air strip on Adak, an island at the far end of the Aleutians between Alaska and Japan. Again he wrote love letters to his beloved Alta. During WWII all of his children served; Mildred and Jesse in the Navy, George in the Army and Gerald in the Merchant Marine, a branch of the coast Guard.

Happily, when the war ended, George and all his children returned home sound of body and of spirit.

After the war, George did some more farming and with adequate rainfall did well with wheat. Later he and Alta moved to California where he worked until he had a stroke. He lost almost all mobility, but kept a good mind, good speech and good humor. So he and Alta were able to enjoy tender companionship until he died, August 6, 1963.

William Henry Ikard, born March 15, 1896 was the sixth child of Betty and Delly. He followed his brothers to the schools they attended and into the fields, but he never possessed the passion for farming that the older brothers did.

In his early twenties when WWI broke out, he volunteered for the Army and got basic training. However a stretch of ill health cut short his time of service; he was honorably discharged in 1918.

On December 14, 1925, he married Clara Gertrude Brewton, daughter of Alford and Mellie Lee Rinehart Brewton. Clara was a very religious person and it suited Henry to follow her pious expectations.

In 1925, Henry and Clara joined Don and Rilla in making a trip to Fort Lauderdale to visit Delly and Betty. Their journey paralleled that of George and Luther's families earlier in the year. Carl, Don's son and a child at the time, could remember the endless flat tires and mechanical problems.

For several months, both Don and Henry worked as carpenters in a boom town whose builders were not too discriminating about a worker's skills. In fact, this was a good opportunity to learn skills that would be helpful in the future. Don had helped his dad to build the farmhouse east of Cyril and had acquired some competence with a saw and hammer. Henry was among the young ones who helped Betty with the crop on leased land in 1906, so he was getting paid to learn skills that would be useful in later years when he and Clara invested in rental property in Lawton.

On March 10, 1937, a son was born, William Edwin. They had waited a long time for this child and both Henry and Clara were ecstatic about adding to their family. Edwin was a happy child with a sunny disposition and the optimism of his grandmother Betty. The strong religious inclinations of his parents set well with Edwin. In fact, as Edwin matured, he was moved to become a pastor in a church of the Assembly of God.

Henry was a fun-loving person, but also an unrelenting tease. At family gatherings, he knew how to provoke a good political argument, but mostly he knew just what remarks would set off a younger sibling or nieces or nephews in defending opinions or behavior. It was all done in light-hearted ridicule with Henry having the longest and last laugh. During a visit to my house in the early 1950s, Alta and George

taught Henry to play Canasta. Henry quickly became good at the game. His special pleasure was to go out at the earliest opportunity to catch all his opponents with a hand full of cards that would count against them. His strategy was not to win but keep others from winning. Oh, how he laughed as he laid down all his cards!

Henry farmed for a time but had little enthusiasm for it. He worked for the oil refinery in Cyril. Most of all he liked the Civil Service job he had at Fort Sill. This job allowed him to buy up lots and build houses on them that he could rent. His estate was in real estate.

Henry was working on the roof of his house in 1960 when he fell to a hard surface sidewalk below, breaking both ankles. Surgeons did a bone graft on one. After six months he recovered enough to return to work.

In the hot "dog days" of September, he visited outside at length with a tenant and was stricken with a stroke. On September 4, 1962, he died. Clara lived on for more than 20 years.

Martin Luther Ikard was the seventh of Betty's and Delly children. He was only 6 years old when the family left Tennessee. Luther was built somewhat like Jim with a thick, heavy chest. His face had gentle features and an often amused expression. He was the family "dude" never caring for the rough and tumble behavior of his cowboy/farmer older brothers. He loved the raillery and laughter of the household and became an accomplished razzler - much like Henry.

One wonders how Luther managed to keep his clothes in tip top condition and to be well groomed on all occasions. Perhaps he cut deals with Maggie and then with Mae to press his pants and iron his shirts. Luther had his own nail for hanging up his wardrobe.

When George went to the Wittens to court Alta, Luther went along. He had an eye for Alta's younger sister Myrtle, a demure girl who was as particular of her appearance as Luther was of his. The romance flourished, but when Luther asked Link for Myrtle's hand in marriage, the answer was no. Carefully Link explained that he liked Luther just fine, but at 18, Myrtle was too young. Link thought that any daughter less than 21 was not ready for marriage. Luther was disappointed but kept up his courting. Myrtle was more than disappointed, she was downright angry with her father. She pleaded to no avail. Yet so persistent was Myrtle that in 1921, when only 19, Link relented and the wedding took place in the Witten home.

Having no desire to farm, Luther looked about for job opportunities that would fit his preferred lifestyle. He found that job with the U.S. Postal Service. For years he carried mail on rural routes out of Cement. Later he was promoted to a position in Lawton. Myrtle was pleased with the conveniences of living in a fair sized town.

Luther took up golf, a sport for the more affluent and sophisticated individual. I don't know how good he was at it (he was an excellent softball player). He threatened to create a golf course on his dad's pasture. The relatives were amused at Luther's stories about wrapping an iron around a fence post when frustrated.

On May 3, 1923, while they lived in Cement, their first child was born, Wallace Luther, a very bright and attractive boy with gentle ways that pleased both his parents. Three years later on July 14, 1926, a daughter, Barbara June, was born. She also was sharp and pretty, but she had a mind of her own, much to the distress of prim Myrtle. Then on March 8, 1931, another son was born. Frank Lee was a good child who made no waves.

Like his brother Henry, Luther was a terrible jester. At every family gathering he provoked some child into cutting up by ribbing and kidding. There was no malice in the scene, but I think Myrtle disapproved.

In the early days of WWII, Luther became ill and was stunned with the diagnosis, leukemia, a form of cancer in which mutated white blood cells take over the bone marrow destroying its ability to function. It was a terrible blow, but Luther sought out the best medical attention, willing himself to survive.

He became a part of the current cutting edge of leukemia research, first in St. Petersburg, Florida, then going to Berkeley, to be near the cyclotron of the University of California. He gained additional years of life by making good choices, but, of course, he did not win. He died in Cyril on May 22, 1950.

Myrtle had been very dependent on Luther. She found widowhood extremely difficult. Once I heard her tell Alta that she was still put out with her father for delaying her wedding, she had all too little time with Luther.

Jesse Edward was the eighth of the Ikard children. He was named for Delly's brother, Jesse Edward, the handsome "dude" of that generation. Jesse was tall and lean with fine, even features. He was by nature gentle and if you listen to siblings, nieces and nephews, he was the favorite. In a household of towering egos, Jesse was threatening to no one.

He was gifted in several ways. At a time when farm equipment was being mechanized, Jesse had a talent for making primitive motors purr away and to diagnose problems and fix machinery. Jesse had the respect of Delly and his brothers for his skills as a mechanic.

Jesse was also talented in music. All the Ikards loved music, sang and played several instruments. It was Jesse who had an ear for many kinds of music. His perfect pitch, his precise timing and his mastery of harmony put him head and shoulders above others in the family and neighborhood. I well remember when I was 12 years old, Uncle Jesse came to call. He asked me to play for him and had

kind things to say about the tunes I played on the piano. He encouraged me to continue practicing and to broaden my repertoire. He asked if I could play "The Stars and Stripes Forever". I could not. So he promptly played a rousing rendition of that well loved march.

Only four when the family arrived in Oklahoma, Jesse likely had little memory of living in Tennessee. He worked like everyone else on the farm but was not inclined to be a farmer.

When the Ikard boys went to visit the Wit tens, Jesse went along. He got on well with all of Alta's younger sisters, and I think he dated Hazel and Nell. Link and Nannie were especially fond of Jesse. But it was a tall, slim, honey blond girl of 17 who captured his heart, Gussie Barton.

Gussie was the child of Buck and Rosa Lee Smith Barton. Born November 13, 1906, in New Hope, Arkansas, she lived in the Fairwell community of Grady County. Gussie went to Fairview School. Jesse and Gussie were married July 23, 1922. Jesse worked in the oilfields of Fairwell.

On September 12, 1924, Jesse Edward Jr. was born. Gussie and Jesse had no idea that Gussie had Rh negative blood. Her infant thrived. But Rh incompatibility takes a dreadful toll because if the second child has Rh positive it risks hemolytic disease. When Joseph William was born on April 9, 1926, he lived less than a day, and Gussie lived only 20 days.

A very young widower, Jesse joined the parade of brothers going to Florida to work in the boom and be comforted by his family. He and his baby son were there when the hurricane of 1926 destroyed much of Fort Lauderdale.

When Jesse returned to Oklahoma, Maggie helped him with little Jesse. Eventually Jesse began to date again. He courted and married on September 15, 1928 in Chickasha, the lively and lovely Ruth Walker. Ruth and Jesse had two children, Eva Beth, born September 19, 1929, and Ralph Reginald born March 26, 1931. The Depression made it difficult for Jesse to provide for his family. He had marketable skills but being young and having no seniority did not help.

Jesse found that he could do well in trucking. As mechanical as he was, he had to pay nothing for maintenance. He landed enough business to get by. It was after work on April 18, 1934 that he stopped by a store on Highway 81 south of Chickasha. There he saw an old friend and stopped to talk. The friend asked to borrow Jesse's truck. He had been drinking, so Jesse did not agree to the loan, but the keys were in the ignition. Later Jesse looked out the window and saw his friend backing out the truck. Jesse hurried to stop the man, jumping in on the passenger side. In a frantic sequence, the drunken man careened down the highway, sometimes on the wrong

side of the road. They crashed head on into another vehicle. The drunk lived, but Jesse died.

His young widow had more than she could bear. With only a high school education and the Depression in full swing, she needed a job and help with her children. It was at this time that several of Jesse's siblings asked to keep Jesse Jr. The child spent time with several of his aunts and uncles before going to live with the George Ikards.

The Walkers helped Ruth. She was attractive, bright and industrious and progressed from each job to a better one. By 1938, she had an executive position with the Chickasha Hotel. Yet tragedy was not through with Jesse's family. Young Reginald came down with a serious illness, osteomyelitis, an infection of bone and bone marrow. Reggie died on July 25, 1937.

Ruth continued her work. One of the frequent guests at the hotel was interested in Ruth. He was Joe Vickers, a railway postal clerk. Romance bloomed and they were married. Sometime in the early 40s, Ruth and Joe moved to Houston, Texas. They had a daughter, Anne. Eva Beth did not have the opportunity of visiting with her Ikard cousins much, but she grew up in a loving home with a delightful little sister.

Much of Jesse's gentle and loving ways is to be seen in his children Jesse Jr, and Eva Beth.

Herbert Louis was the tenth of the Ikard children. He was born near Alto and was, at three, the Ikard baby that came by train to Oklahoma. There are only two photos of Herbert, one in a group of the family before they left Decherd and the other also of assembled Ikards in front of the house where they homesteaded.

Mae said that Herbert was a big, robust and hyperactive fellow. No doubt he went to school at Caddo Pride, had Indian boys for friends and rode horses with abandon as his brothers did.

It was on Thanksgiving, November 29, 1917, that he chose to go hunting with a friend, one of the Coleman boys. One of the guns was loaded and not on safety as they crawled through a fence. The trigger caught on a barbed wire. The gun fired and Herbert was struck. He died before help could arrive. What a loss!

Fred Oklahoma Ikard was born on March 31, 1907, the year that Indian Territory became the 46th of the United States. Perhaps that is how he got his name. Of course, by now Betty and Delly were running out of names. Fred once told me that Betty had considered naming him Early Easter because of the date of his arrival.

He attended Caddo Pride School, made friends with everyone and cut quite a swath in the neighborhood. All his nieces and nephews know the story about Fred

breaking up a Christmas celebration at Caddo Pride. On the way Fred came across a skunk and killed the critter. It didn't enter his head that the strong odor was on him and his presence at the event was unacceptable.

Delly and Betty were more than a little indulgent with Fred. Perhaps they thought that he would be the last child. Both were past 40 when Fred was born.

Though he always had a fine saddle horse, he was less a cowboy than his brothers. Where the older boys were crazy for trains, Fred was enamored with the early automobiles. Delly was among the first around Cyril to have a car. Jesse kept it running and Fred did the lion's share of driving. He drove as fast as Jesse and that was speedy. Frequently his conversation was the time it took to cover a distance, "making time."

There was a high school in Cyril in the early 20s. Fred attended until the Ikards sold out the farm and moved to Florida. No longer a country boy, Fred passed up the carpenter jobs that were available in Florida and got a job, at 18, as bookkeeper for a firm in Fort Lauderdale. A letter on page 207 to George and Alta tells of his pride in mastering the machines in the office, and of the fine clothes he bought. And, yes, he began attending tea dances at a local hotel!

Fred was launched as the family "play boy." Delly and Betty were pleased with the social life of Fred and his sister Mae. He loved popular music and became a good pianist. Beginning with ragtime, he progressed through Dixieland jazz. In later years he moved on to the big band sounds of the 40s. One did not have to beg Fred to play. He was the center of attention at gatherings. Fred was outgoing, optimistic and very popular. He nieces and nephews adored him. Because he was almost 30 before he married, he enjoyed the role of bachelor uncle, often taking younger Ikards with him on trips, even dates! As the kids grew up, Fred took them with him when he went dancing at Medicine Park in the Wichita Mountains. Oh, the stories of those nights of revelry!

After playing the field for many years, Fred found the girl, Leona Helen Salyer, one of the younger children of J.E. and Pearly Salyer. She had attended school in Oney, graduating in 1934 and was a college student when she met Fred. It was a whirlwind courtship and they married in Wichita Falls, Texas on November 9, 1935. For a time, they lived with Betty in her small home in Cyril.

The Salyers really liked Fred and he returned the affection. Leona loved dancing as much as Fred did. Though they both worked hard, when the weekend arrived, they dressed up in dancing clothes and headed for the live music and slick dance floor of the hotel in Medicine Park. They danced most every dance until the band packed up to go home. Wherever Fred and Leona lived, his many nieces and

nephews were welcome at any time. Innumerable evenings of lively music and good fellowship followed in the 30s and 40s.

Fred joined George in working at the refinery in Cyril. He was a cheerful, punctual worker, but his avocation was selling cars. Fred knew the value of stylish cars. His own cars had pizzazz, and for a working lifetime, Fred dealt in cars with flair. His success in marketing sporty cars to "gay blades" in the area assured his family a living as well as music lessons and college tuition.

A daughter, Lanny Frances was born to Fred and Leona on September 13, 1936. It was in the middle of the drought that laid waste to Oklahoma for a decade. Lanny's arrival was the bright spot of that year. She was named for Fred's adored father, Lanson O'Dell. What a charmer she was! Betty doted on the child, and because I spent much time with Betty, I also fell under her spell.

The Fred Ikards attended the Christian Church in Cyril; Lanny was a regular. In the years that Lanny was growing up, Leona went to college, majored in English, and got her degree in elementary education. She then taught history at Braxton School in the years 1947-1950.

Fred was 35 years old when WWII began and not obligated to serve, but he felt an urgency to do so. With the skills he had acquired working at the refinery, he was eagerly snapped up by the Seabees, a branch of the U.S. Navy with the charge of hastily building runways and support buildings on islands retaken from the Japanese in the Pacific. This "can-do" outfit was highly valued by the Navy. In no time after an area was secured, the Seabees had the necessities in place for hostile operations by our forces. Fred loved the work and being appreciated. He, like George, was a good letter writer. Leona, Lanny and Betty heard from him often. He came back from the war sound in body and in spirit.

Back in Cyril, he returned to his job at the refinery and to selling cars. He partied on weekends and enjoyed the events celebrated by an extended family. But things were not the same for Leona and Fred. They divorced amiably in 1957 and remained good friends for all of Fred's life.

In the 1960s, Fred courted a tall and attractive young woman, Vonna Deane Lumpkin, of Apache. She is the daughter of Tobe and Pauline Lumpkin, and attended school in Braxton. On April 4, 1961, she and Fred were married in Wichita Falls. They lived in the house Fred owned at the curve of Highway 277 as it passes through Cyril.

Their son Fred O'Dell (of course, named for Fred's father, Lanson O'Dell) was born January 2, 1962, in Cyril. Fred was in his early 50s at the time. But, oh, how proud of his son! Freddy was an outdoor enthusiast from the beginning. Vonna

could scarcely get him in the house for necessities like meals and baths. He rapidly grew into a young and gentle giant, 6 feet 8 inches tall.

This marriage was to end cordially, also, with the divorce coming in 1972. Freddy remained with his father. Fred relished the role of parent and saw to it that Freddy had the enormous meals that such a growing fellow required. Because Fred and Vonna remained on good terms, Freddy was spared the worst pains of divorce. He frequently spent time with his mother.

On New Year's Eve of 1982, Freddy went out with friends. On his return, he found Fred lying on the floor of the living room, dead. It was a devastating blow for a young man. I was at Fred's home the next day when both Leona and Vonna came to put his house in good order. Both women embraced and through their tears comforted the other. It says something about the generous and easy-going temperament of Fred that no malice followed his divorces, only affection and respect.

Mary Tennessee "Mae" was the twelfth and last child of Delly and Betty who were in their mid 40s when she was born on May 31, 1910, at the farm east of Cyril. She had feet that turned in somewhat. Betty was able to find braces for the child and learned the exercises and massage that would allow the feet to straighten out. Though it was a painful process for Mae, the treatment was successful; she attained a walk without fault, indeed, she learned to dance. The numerous hours that Betty and Mae spent together developed a great relationship. Mae adored her mother.

She learned to be a sassy, naughty child from her jesting brothers. Maggie was married, living nearby and had her own small child, so Mae interacted with a doting mother and several really rowdy brothers. She went to Caddo Pride School and made the most of instruction. She bragged that she could, thanks to her brothers, curse in five languages when she went to school. Mae had a way with word and became a good writer. A daredevil of a girl, she matched her brothers in riding cow ponies like a hurricane.

When the family sold the farm in 1924 and went to Florida, Mae was pleased, though she and Betty got enough camping and making do before Delly completed a house for them.

Mae was only 14 years old, but she was resourceful. She never went to school in Florida. Instead, she got a job as a clerk in a store. No doubt she was a rebellious teen whose independent ways were a pain to Delly. No longer a child, Mae began to date and soon met the "right man." He was Elvin Sylvester "Bud" Hicks from Alabama.

Bud, born September 5, 1907, was the son of William F. and Margaret Ranson Hicks. He was attracted to the boom in Florida as were the Ikards. Bud's genius was

with auto mechanics. With prosperous people with fancy cars flooding into the Miami area, Bud's skills were in demand. At 18, he was making a good salary. He was a man. When the spark ignited between him and Mae, he contemplated marriage. Apparently neither the Hicks nor the Ikards objected, though Mae was only 15 at the time. She had been a handful for Delly.

On February 3, 1926, they were married in Fort Lauderdale. Perhaps it was after the hurricane of 1926 and the Ikards returned to Oklahoma that Mae and Bud moved to Ocala, a small city in the north central part of the state. Opportunities there suited them both. Bud did very well in running a garage and eventually he had a car dealership of his own.

Their daughter, Loretta Mae "Pat" was born April 17, 1929, in Ocala. Pat was a tall, responsible child who welcomed a sister, Paulene Fay, born October 6, 1931. Mae had learned stitching from Betty and took pride in dressing her children in exquisite hand made clothing. She was able to look at an expensive garment in the best department stores, then go home and reproduce it. The Hicks were a well dressed family.

In June of 1937, Paulene became ill with what appeared a bad summer cold, but the illness progressed rapidly to spinal meningitis. Within a few days she was dead. It was a terrible blow.

The following year, on March 27, 1938, Bonita Kay "Bonnie" was born. She was a peaches-and-cream cherub. Pat, who had found the loss of Paulene traumatic, was especially protective of the tiny sister.

Mae and Bud were quite successful in the auto business. She kept books. Bud had the Packard-Willis Agency in the 1940s. Later Mae got into real estate when the country surrounding Ocala was bought up by investors in horse farms. The challenge of showing rough country acres and closing a big deal was much to her liking. During this time Mae wrote a column of homespun memories and humor for the local newspaper.

The Hicks enjoyed traveling, particularly by car. In addition to the almost yearly jaunt to Oklahoma, that Mae called "Old Windy," they drove into every section of the country. Having spent most of their lives in flat Florida, both found mountain driving somewhat threatening.

In March of 1976, Mae and Bud celebrated their golden wedding anniversary; the first of our family to be so fortunate. A jolly reception included friends and family.

Two and a half years later Bud died. Mae built a comfortable retirement house on land near her two daughters. She thoroughly enjoyed her sons-in-law and her sturdy grandsons who reminded her of her big brothers. These Florida men were

masters of hunting and fishing. Fishing with Mae was an unforgettable experience. She whooped, like in her cowboy days, when she or a guest caught a big bass. Fishing etiquette in Marion County requires that the guest catches the first fish, the host delays his/her catch until the visitor has the victory.

Mae suddenly died on February 6, 1985, at 75 years. She was the last of Delly's and Betty's children to go. The cousins felt a deep sense of loss. Mae was especially popular among the cousins and she relished the role as the grand old lady of the family. Always a good story teller, she held the rapt attention of nieces and nephews and their children when the family gathered. They hung on her every word.

A colorful generation had now passed into history.