

Remembrances of Florence (Hall) Petitt
as told to her granddaughter, Patti Prince, in 1991

When I was a girl we lived about 10 miles out in the country. I never saw town til I was 16. Then I got to go to Morehead. It looked so big! Of course, they just had dirt roads then, no pavement. But I remember all the wood fronts on the buildings and there was a big sign painted on the side of the feed store where they grind grain. It was a big bull and it covered about half the building! It just looked so big! I remember that day forever. Everything was so big.

Most of the time at home we just worked. We'd help the boys hoe corn in the fields. I remember the school too. All the grades went to school in one room, first through eighth grade. They'd start with the 8th grade lesson and go on down. The little kids had to sit still and wait. They knew if they didn't they'd get the switch. Of course we didn't have plumbing in those days. The school house was right on the edge of the woods and if you had to go you just stepped in a little ways.... course you had to watch where you stepped!

I remember when my dad dug our well. They'd just start with a post hole digger and start digging. They'd make it bigger and deeper and just keep on going til they reached water. Then they'd stop and start building up rocks around it from the bottom. Then they'd get a switch or sapling and stretch it across the top.

I knew Truby when I was just a kid. We went to school together. He was always pickin' on me and makin' fun and I hated him. Then we grew up and he went off. He was working then and he wrote me a letter. Then we courted for about eight months, then got married.

My mom moved to Kentucky in a covered wagon. It took them two weeks. I guess she was about 9 then.¹ The boys was big then. They'd sleep under the wagon at night and the women folk would sleep inside. When they'd get hungry they'd just buy a chicken from a farmer or something. That's the way they ate. Then they'd light a campfire and cook it. They moved all the way from Carroll County, Virginia that way.

My mom was a little woman, real small. She had the tiniest feet. She had to buy children's shoes. I think she wore about a size 2. She was small all over, about Joleen's size.² Sometimes I wonder how she had so many kids! She had dark brown hair, almost black. I think she had brown eyes. Dad was big. All the Halls was big. He had brown hair. I don't remember his eyes. They musta been brown too.

Medford, he always liked the girls. When he was little he'd play with the little neighbor girl. By that time several families had moved in and it was like a little village. He'd play with Zony. She was kinda an unkempt little girl. Her mom had to work. Her sister and brother didn't care where she went. It wasn't far, just across the road, so she'd come over and Medford, he'd run and get his little rockin' chair. We got him his own little rockin' chair. And he'd go get it and set it outside for her. She'd set down and rock away. One time I says to him, "Why you always playin' with that ol' shitty Zony?" And he says back, "She ain't no shitty Zony, Mom! She's a good Zony!" I remember that. So I let him go on playin' with her.

Then there was when Ted come along. We told Medford we was goin' to go get another baby. Course he didn't know how we go about gettin' 'em. He thought we just went to the store or something like that. Well, Medford, he wants a girl. He wants us to bring him a sister. He went to go stay with relatives for about two weeks when it was time. When we brought Ted home, we showed him to Medford and we says, "Medford, do you like him? Or do you think we oughtta take him back?" He takes a good look at Ted and he says, "Oh, let's keep 'im! He's too purty to take back!" And he was, too. Ted was a purty baby.

I had trouble with birthin' Medford but none with Ted. Truby's mom was a midwife then and she delivered him. With Medford the doctor left some of the afterbirth in there and when it tore loose I near bled to death, hemorhagin'. I thought they'd never stop it.

¹ Actually, according to his military pension application, the Oliver Quesenberry family moved to Kentucky in the summer of 1879, at which time Florence's mother, Nancy Quesinberry, would have been recently turned 12.

² At the time of this interview, Patti's daughter Joleen was 4 foot 6 inches tall.