

Sorensen, Doris Ann MITCHELL -

My Memories

Written in the early 2000s

Retyped by Dean Bones February 2023

I was born November 23, 1925, in Fort Worth, Texas, but, of course, I don't remember anything about that or Fort Worth. We moved to Louisiana when I was 4 years old. I remember one scene at the tourist cabin that is what motels were called those days where we lived when we first moved. I sat in the driveway and played in the gravel while my mother washed clothes in a wash tub with a scrub board. I have no idea what kind of car we had, but I know that my dad had a hard time cranking it to get it started on cold winter mornings.

I started to school in August or September 1931 before I was 6 in November. My dad drove the school bus which had canvas curtains along the side instead of windows. There was a strap with a snap on it to tie them up or snap them shut in case of rain. They had wooden benches along the sides of the bus and two benches back to back in the middle. We rode 15 or 20 miles to school. It was a unified district, and we had 1st through 11th grades in one building. All the grade school was downstairs except 7th grade which was upstairs with the high school. Louisiana graduated students from high school in 11 years until about 1950 when they added grade 12.

It was not until I was in the 5th grade that I began to catch on to school and started making better grades. As I look back on that I think it was probably because I was so young when I started to school. I graduated in 1942 and was the second highest in my class. I was given a scholarship to go to Louisiana Tech, but at the time I was not interested in going to college. It would have cost about \$1,000.00 a year at that time to go to a state college.

I had taken shorthand and typing in high school and applied for a job at Barksdale Field in February 1943. This was just a little over a year after World War II began, and it was easy to get a job. I went to work for \$100 a month. I paid my sister-in-law \$20 a month for room and board. Her husband, my brother, was in the Sea Bees in the South Pacific. I also helped with their 2 children who were 2 and 4 years old. I met Willard Sorensen in 1943, and we dated until he was transferred from Barksdale and was then sent to India to serve in the China-Burma-India theater of war.

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In the spring of 1945 I felt the Lord wanted me to go to a Christian college, and I quit my job in June and attended East Texas Baptist College. I went that summer as well as the next year to college.

Willard was discharged from the Air Force in February 1946, and we were married in July. We lived in Petaluma, California the 1st year we were married.

During the war we were issued stamps so that we could buy a limited amount of sugar, gasoline, shoes and possibly some other things. I remember in the summer of 1946 we would have to stand in line at the grocery store to get shortening. At Christmas there were no Christmas decorations to buy. I still have a little red plastic Santa boot which was the only decoration available. There were no lights for Christmas trees or outside decorations. We strung popcorn and cranberries to decorate our tree.

We moved to Oregon from Petaluma, California, in May 1947. We bought a new ton and a half Studebaker truck, and my husband built a trailer to move our furniture and other things to the farm on Blaine Road.

Tillamook County and dairy farming was a new experience for me, and though I had grown up on a farm all of this was completely new. We did not have a tractor when we moved to Beaver but used work horses to do the farm work. When I got my Oregon driver's license the man at the DMV Office asked me if my husband was a farmer or a logger. He inferred that these were the only two options in Tillamook County.

There were covered bridges over the Nestucca River on Blaine Road. The 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 5th bridges were covered. The 4th bridge was right in front of our house, and the new one east of our home was built in its present location in 1956. At election time we voted in the Beaver Church, and those from about the 5th bridge up voted at the Grange Hall on Blaine Road. Grange was an important part of the social life of this rural community in the 40s and 50s.

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I remember the Beaver School had a playshed out near the road. We attended some of the activities at the school, but since we did not have any children in school it was not too important to us. At that time there was a school at Blaine, 1 at Hemlock and 1 at Sandlake. Each had 1st - 8th grades. Of course that is what Beaver, Hebo and Cloverdale schools had at that time. Blaine and Hemlock joined the Beaver School in the early 50s. Sandlake School did not close until sometime in the 60s.

There were many cheese factories all over the county. At one time I counted all of the families up the Blaine Road that milked cows and shipped milk to the Beaver Cheese Factory. As I remember there were between 20 and 25. When we moved to Beaver there was a building on our farm that had been a cheese factory. I understand that there were many little cheese factories throughout the county in generations past. There were also all kinds of little sawmills up river from us and 1 or 2 in Beaver. There were 2 between Beaver and Hemlock. It was very common to see log trucks with only 1 big log for their load.

Do you know the year that Beaver became a middle school and Cloverdale became the elementary school for all of South County? That is part of our community history too. Many things have changed in the past 50 years, but open your eyes and remember that history is happening and that we hardly recognize it.