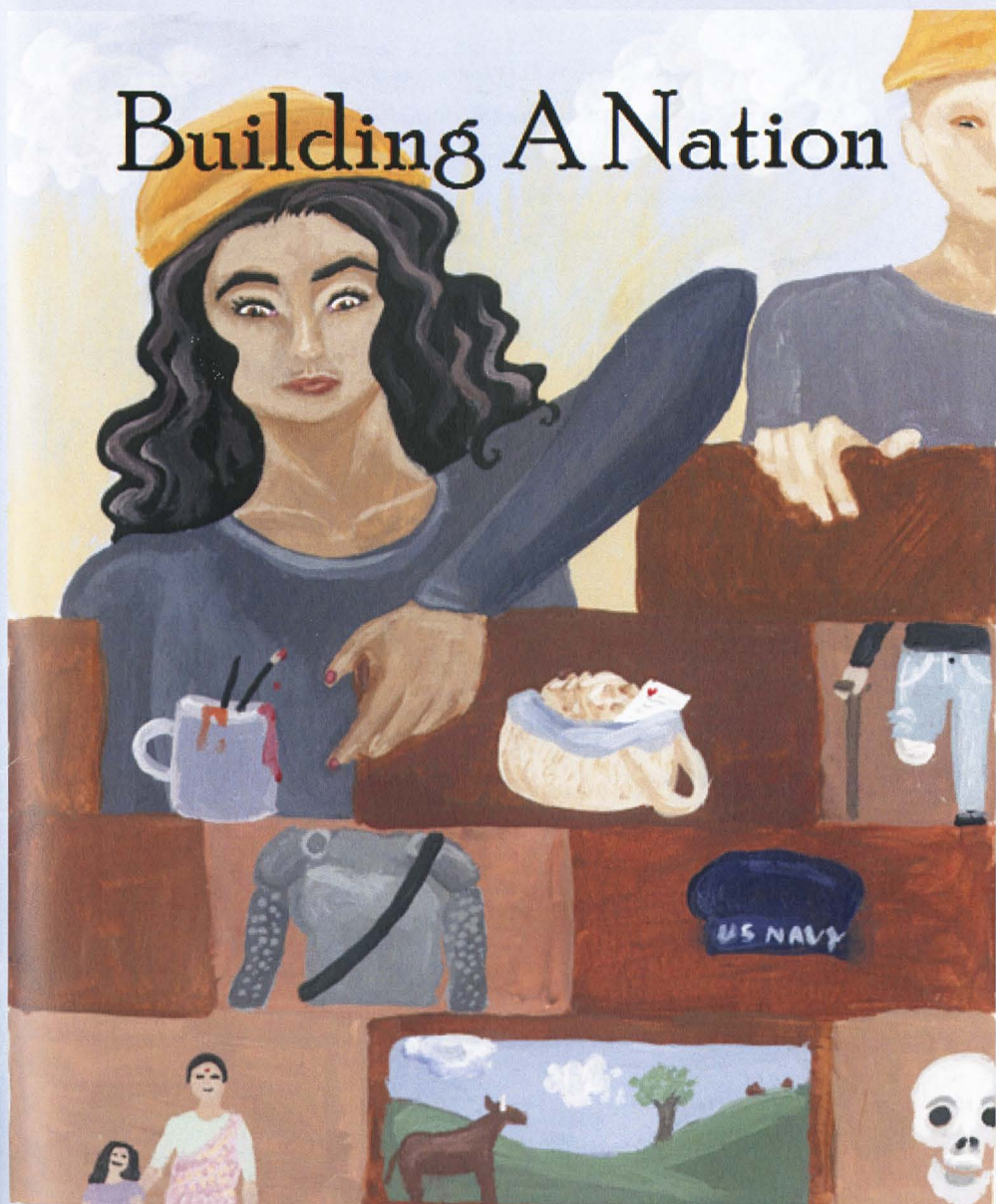


# Building A Nation



I dedicate this book to all of my students

At Surry Community College

Who have worked very hard to research and write these stories

In order to share them with their classmates, family, and friends.

I appreciate their efforts

# Building a Nation

Volume 1

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## Preface

Family history is a journey. Whether one's ancestors are indigenous or immigrant, their stories are journeys in time, moving from past to present. Tracing those lines of ancestry can tell us much about ourselves, but it also tells us much about the building of our nation. It tells us about the lives of everyday people: their challenges, their triumphs, their tragedies. Their lives are the backbone of our nation, they are not insignificant, and they should not be forgotten: from the farmer raising a living from the land, to the miner risking life and limb underground, to the soldier willing to stand for a cause, the unsung heroes of history are an important part of our heritage and should not be forgotten. That is what this project is all about.

*Building a Nation* is the result of the research and hard work of my American Literature students in the spring of 2016. They were tasked with investigating previous generations of the families they claimed, whether biological, adoptive, or chosen. They then researched the time periods and cultures within which those people lived, and they recorded their discoveries in the form of narratives.

The stories in this resulting collection range through five centuries and four continents. They tell tales of childhood hardships and dangerous careers, of hopeful dreams and tragic reality. Regardless of the time or place in which these stories take place they all contribute to the cultural and ethnic richness which is the melting pot which we call America.

All of the students who took part in this project had the opportunity to practice their skills in researching and writing, drawing upon various modes of composition. I hope that they had fun in the process, and I hope that you enjoy the results.

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# 1200-1300

## **Boundaries: The Story of the Brave Women and Men of the Zurich Clan of Switzerland DeeDee Brown**

The information for this narrative is found from a manuscript from Sharon Taylor, a member of the Faw family. The manuscript was written after a trip to Switzerland in search of the original documents to trace the family lineage, and was written in the 1960's.

My Papa Faw was a large man who played the mouth harp and had a deep belly laugh until the stroke drew his face in on itself. He was not a man who wanted for much, good weather, a rocking chair, and a place to play his harp, that was all. He listened politely in his rocking chair, on a nice bright day, harp in hand, as Ms. Sharon Taylor (relation somehow) told him of her wild plans to go off to Switzerland and find out where they came from.

Papa's family traced back to what is now Switzerland in the thirteenth century, but, at the time were small city states reigned over by powerful families. My people were one of those large families, living in castles with moats and reigning over the peoples of the land. The castles were originally forts, which were intended to keep the farmers safe from invaders from Austria, France, and Germany, as those people lived just on the borders of our lands. In 1276, Duke Albert of Austria began taking over many lands and pillaging the people, taking from them the land and hard fought possessions they had known for all their lives. To protect themselves, their people, and their surrounding lands, the Swiss noblemen—among them my ancestors—made a pact to help each other fight off the attacks that were leaving their lands barren. This pact is the Federal Charter of 1291, documenting the League of the Three Forest Cantons. It is the reason for the Swiss national holiday on August first, commemorating the beginnings of the country. The three original cantons were the families of Uri, Schwyz, and Unterwalden; during the 1300's five new families were included to this pact, among them the Zurich. My family is only dated back by name to 1320; however, being the date the construction of the original Farnsburg castle which is my peoples homeplace. Farsburg is my family's original name, but as time progressed, the name eventually became Faw, when Jacob and Elizabeth Faw migrated to America in 1750. It is known though, that my people originated in Switzerland, so these people of the Zurich and the other clans were all included in the gene pool that created my specific strand.

The Zurich was a family who owed a large castle and had many peoples who depended on them for protection from the invasions that wrecked their lands and broke apart nations ages old. In the fifteenth century the pressure from the armies was pushing hard on these people. People were losing their homes, their lands, and their lives. The Zurich were a strong, proud, and honest people, so when the land of Winterthur, a neighbor, came under attack from the Duke, the Zurich knew what they had to do. All the men in the village suited up and marched with their swords and gleaming armor to fight for their lives. I am sure many of these men were only marching to protect their families - knowing that if they if the army took Winterthur, they would

soon move on to take their homes. These men each had different reasons, different things they fought for, but history only knows that they fought, and each man fought with the vigor of a man knowing he could die any moment in the gruesome chaos of warfare in this time. The Duke took Winterthur.

Before a breath, Duke Albert moved on to Zurich with his swords and his battle axes, his archers and Calvary. He sought only the land and the power and cared nothing for the lives he ruined, the terrible path of agony he left behind him. To the miserable fears of the men slumped on the ground, breathing hard and hurting for the life they barely escaped with, he was doing exactly as they had feared. The men who survived looked at the still open eyes of the man laying dead on the battle field he marched beside, wishing he was that man, who no longer worried for the lives of his children, his wife, his brothers and sisters.

While these men fought for their lives and cried at the realization of their death, the women were to stay home. They kept about their home life as much as they could, knowing that if they stopped for even a moment, they would realize the horror of their situation. The wives did twice or three times as much as they did previously, to compensate for the lack of their husbands and sons. These women had small babies that they held close to their breast as they leaned on the doors of their small cottages, brow furrowed for their family, should the father - the breadwinner- never come back. The children played in the cobblestone streets with sticks they pretended were gleaming swords, dreaming of some idea of glory their older brother always spoke of. The older sister watches, knowing that this brother of grand ideals may never come back to tell of his glory.

While these women bent over in their fields or looked longingly out the castle windows, an army marched on their homes. Fast and hard, that is how they would strike. The city was not armed, and the army would have the land and be back by dinner. The men thought of how the Duke would be so pleased with their progress - the feast would be magnificent, and the spoils from this land would bode better than the battle. Homes always brought better spoils than the bodies of soldiers, men don't carry much when they know they are going to die.

It is not known how the people of the village got word to go back to the village in time to warn those there, but someone did. The people of the clan may have left a few men to patrol the area. It may have been a clever mother, who had sent her eldest son to hide when the nobles came through to take the soldiers, hiding in the woods to return when the battle was fought. In the night he stole away from the camp he made for himself by the river, when he saw a soldier in Austrian armor fall drunkenly into the river. When the informer got there, they gathered with the women, unsure of how to save their homes, their children, their lives. Many were sure this was the end, after all, what could they do. They had never fought battles before. One brave woman, a young widow with a regal look stood up in the mass of frantic women. She spoke in a clean, strong voice, knowing if she faltered even once, these women would dismiss her plot. Seeing no other way of action, they followed their commander.

The young widow raided the armory of the castles for armor and swords left behind, and suited these women, nobles and peasants alike in ill-fitting armor and tied their hair back tight, dirtied their faces and put them in straight rows. The young women tall enough to pass were pushed quickly through the lines, and the ones who were not were put in cold, high-walled rooms in the depths of the castle where the cries of infants echoed on the walls. An old woman with a crooked spine brushed a freckled girl's hair as she cried for her mother. An old man with a bent leg kissed a dark haired child's eyes and sang an ancient lullaby that sounded like the wind blowing through the dry leaves in the trees. Out of the armory marched these brave women, my ancestors, to what they thought, was their death.

The band of women marched to the front gate of the castle, holding their swords high, far off in the distance they saw the army that was to invade them. There was a moment of utter silence between the two armies as they set eyes on each other. The invading army saw the terrible mass of soldiers waiting for them, and knowing they were not equipped to fight, Duke Albert of Austria himself rode on horseback to negotiate with the commander. The women watched the lone, decorated man ride toward them. They tensed collectively hoping desperately this man would not grow wise to their ruse. The woman before, the commander, threw herself on a horse and rode out to meet him, if only to keep them away from the army. She spoke quickly and sternly to the Duke as an equal officer. A man. She did not shake, she did not crack, and she did not break under the enormous pressure of maintaining the safety of her homeland. She negotiated as if she were born for the job, and maybe she was. She was able to create a treaty for the two. The women jeered back at the receding invaders, knowing they had beaten them, protected their homes, land, children, and lives. Many of them thought of the tales of glory they could tell their husbands and sons, when they got back. They had broken free of the back-breaking despair they had lived in and saw the light of their future, saw the possibilities of their lives not that invasion no longer hung over their heads like a blade, and they - a band of women - saved them. They surely thought they would pass these stories down to their daughters, they would be immortal in the retelling of this ingenious plot for many years to come. I wonder if any of them ever thought that twelve generations later, a young woman of their clan would be telling the story of their great triumph to you?

# 1600-1700

## The Promise Kathleen D. Fowler

William Fowler (abt. 1594-25 Jan. 1658/59; married Margrett (abt. 1594-?): the couple immigrated to the colonies from England; they settled in Nansemond County, Virginia as planters.



Arms of the Virginia Company

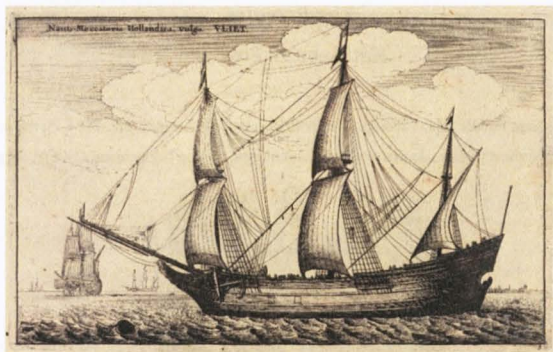
John Stow. *Survey of London* (1598. Reprinted 1720)<sup>1</sup>

Land had been sighted, and a general excitement arose from the passengers of the *Abigail*. They had been voyaging for six weeks across the Atlantic from England on their way to the Colonies, and they were eager to disembark. Most of that time had been spent below decks, trying to keep out of the way of the crew, and the thought of being able to finally leave their cramped bunks and stretch their legs on dry land thrilled them.

The *Abigail* was just one of many ships which carried passengers to the new settlement at Jamestown, forty miles up the James River in Virginia. Most were cargo ships converted to carry as many as two hundred colonists, along with their provisions and livestock.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Tarter, Brent. "Old Dominion." *Encyclopedia Virginia*. Virginia Foundation for the Humanities, 30 Jan. 2014. Web. 7 Feb. 2016. See also *A Survey of the Cities of London and Westminster: Containing the Original, Antiquity, Increase, Modern Estate and Government of Those Cities*. DA680.S87 1720. Special Collections, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Va. The 1632 edition of the Survey of London described the coat of arms as "Argent, a cross gules, between four escutcheons, each regally crowned proper, the first escutcheon in the dexter chief, the arms of France and England, quarterly; the second in the sinister chief, the arms of Scotland; the third the arms of Ireland; the fourth as the first. The crest was: On a wreath of the colours, a maiden queen couped below the shoulders proper, her hair dishevelled of the last, vested and crowned with an Eastern crown or. The supporters were: Two men in complete armour, with their beavers open, on their helmets three ostrich feathers argent, each charged on the breast with a cross throughout gules, and each holding in his exterior hand a lance proper." The company's motto, *En Dat Virginia Quintem* identified the colony as the fifth realm of the crown after England, Scotland, Ireland, and France.

<sup>2</sup> Kingsbury, Susan Myra, ed. *The Records of the Virginia Company: The Court Book, From the Manuscript in the Library of Congress*. Vol. 1. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1906. 409-410. The information about the *Abigail* is taken from the court document of 4 November 1620. According to this document the *Abigail* (sic.) was a 350-ton vessel, owned by Mr. Bland and Mr. Wiseman. It could carry two hundred passengers and fifty tons of cargo. The fee was 700£ upfront and 600£ upon reaching the destination. It was captained by Samuel Each. For general information on fluyts, see "Fluyt." *Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia*. 6 February 2016. Web. 7 February 2016.



Wenceslaus Hollar's sketch of a fluyt (1677)  
University of Toronto Wenceslaus Hollar Digital Collection<sup>3</sup>

The cargo was stored in a large bay near the waterline, and colonists had to squeeze into a narrow deck just above which measured only about eighty feet long.<sup>4</sup> These ships were based on a Dutch design which Dutchmen called a *fluyt*, but which the English called an East Indiaman vessel. They were pear-shaped, with three masts and a shallow draft which made it easy for them to sail up rivers.<sup>5</sup> They could carry twice the cargo at half the cost and needed only a minimal crew of about thirty-five sailors.<sup>6</sup> However, they were not very fast, so crossing the Atlantic took about forty-two days. That was a long time for people unaccustomed to sea travel to be stuck in a bunk below deck.

William Fowler and his wife Margaret were two of those passengers. They had boarded the ship at a port on the Ile of Wight after signing a contract with the Virginia Company of London.<sup>7</sup> Like most of the others on the voyage, they had pledged their labor in exchange for the promise of land. After three years of work, they would earn fifty acres with a promise of fifty more if they continued to live in the colony.<sup>8</sup> They had to furnish their own provisions, and the clothing, food, weapons, tools, and household items they needed amounted to about 20£ per person. That was an enormous cost, and to tell the truth, many colonists made the voyage without all of the necessary provisions.

The Virginia Company made Jamestown sound like a paradise. The promise of owning land was what drew most people. Acreage was difficult to come by in England. Wealthy land owners had begun to enclose as personal property land which had previously been rented out to tenants to farm or which had been common lands used for grazing. Three years of labor seemed a small price to pay for fifty, maybe even a hundred acres of good, tillable land. Those who

<sup>3</sup> Hollar, Wenceslaus. *A Flute*. 1677. University of Toronto. Wenceslaus Hollar Digital Collection. Plate Number P1272.

<sup>4</sup> Bryant, Dennis. "Fluyt." *Maritime Professional*. 5 Nov. 2013. Web. 7 February 2016.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> Kingsbury, *Records of the Virginia Company*, Vol. 1, 410.

<sup>8</sup> Kingsbury, *Records of the Virginia Company*, Vol. 3, 579.

signed the contract were also led to believe that they would find a thriving settlement, with premade houses ready for them to occupy. Such was not the full truth. Instead, new arrivals found a settlement suffering from disease and lack of food. Homes which had been built by previous colonists had been abandoned as their owners died either of sickness or starvation. The problem was they could not yet produce enough food to sustain them throughout the year. Frequent pleas to the Company for relief supplies were harshly answered with demands for the colonists to plant more corn. For the residents of Jamestown and the surrounding settlements, the sight of ships carrying more colonists meant an even greater strain on their already severely limited resources. If those colonists came without the necessary provisions, they were just more hungry-mouths to feed during the winter.

The *Abigail* arrived in November 1621. Captain Samuel Each ferried the passengers and their belonging to shore. William and Margrett were assigned a portion of the Company's land beyond the Hampton River one of the tributaries which flowed into the James River from the north. Their land was east of Jamestown, close to the mouth of the James River and part of the area known as Kecoughtan.<sup>9</sup> Only a few years later, in 1624, it would be renamed Elizabeth City by King James I, but it was more a county or shire.

William and Margrett had to survive on the provisions which they had brought with them or which they could either find or trade during the winter of 1621. The price of basic commodities soared because of their scarcity, and many of the colonists perished for lack of food. Livestock which had been brought with them were either slaughtered to feed the starving colonists or died because of the lack of provender. Local Native Americans would occasionally visit with venison, turkeys, fish, furs, and other provisions to sell in exchange for glass beads and other items they valued.<sup>10</sup> Those colonists who could write, sent letters to England begging to be resupplied. Nevertheless, help was long in coming, and many did not survive the first winter. Of those who did, many had second thoughts about staying in the colony.

Because of the severity of the famine, some of the men turned to raiding nearby Native American villages to steal corn. These attacks revived earlier hatreds over the English theft of their land, the burning of their homes, and the killing of their people, and they were soon to be revenged. Opachankano, the chief of the Powhatan, organized all of his people who were living in the Jamestown area and prepared for a coordinated, surprise attack.<sup>11</sup> The colony was spread out in little settlements for 140 miles along the James River, making defense difficult. Opachankano directed bands of warriors to the various settlements with instructions to kill everyone: men, women, and children.

<sup>9</sup> "Elizabeth City Shire." *Norfolk, Virginia History*. Norfolk History Publishers. N.d. Web. 7 February 2016.

<sup>10</sup> Kingsbury, *Records of the Virginia Company*, Vol. 1, 410.

<sup>11</sup> Kingsbury, *Records of the Virginia Company*, Vol. 3, 550-554. The following description of the massacre is taken from these records.





John White's painting of a Powhatan warrior (1585)  
From Captain John Smith's *Generall Historie* (1624)

The attack began on Friday morning, 22 March 1622. The colonists were just beginning their day's work preparing their fields for planting and taking care of their surviving livestock. Some were gardening, others were making bricks or sawing logs for buildings. Still others were just sitting down to breakfast. Many died before they even realized they were being attacked. In all, 347 men, women, and children, young and old, were slaughtered that day. Their bodies were hacked and mutilated. Parts of the mangled corpses were carried away as trophies. Yet the death count would have been much higher if it were not for one Powhatan man who warned the colonists as soon as he got word of the impending attack.

Chauco was a Christianized Native American who lived in the home of a man named, Pace. He had been given Opachankano's orders during the night and immediately told Pace who got in his boat and rowed three miles across the James River in the night to warn the governor in Jamestown. The town was immediately secured and word was sent to as many of the outlying settlements as possible before the attack. Thankfully, William and Margrett Fowler were two of those who received the warning and managed to survive the massacre.

The young couple had journeyed to America like so many others believing the colonies to be a realm of opportunity, yet within the first four months of their arrival in the New World they had faced both famine and war. Of the many who had travelled with them in the close quarters of the *Abigail*, only eighteen survived to 1624.<sup>12</sup> America was a land of opportunity, but it was also a land of hardship. It took a special determination to survive those three pledged years to earn the land they had been promised.

<sup>12</sup> Hotten Book. *Musters of the Inhabitants of Virginia 1624/25*. 201-265.

# 1700-1800

## A Nation Relying on the Strength of the Great Thayendanegea Mackenzie Ammann

In the spring of 1743, my fifth great-grandfather, Joseph Brant was born in the territories of Ohio, along the Cuyahoga River (Penick). As a child, he grew up among members of a local, unidentified tribe of Indians. These Indians were unique in the sense that they practiced a Christian religion similar to Free Masonry (Marshall).<sup>13</sup> For many years, the family was content and felt a sense of camaraderie<sup>14</sup> among members of the community; however, things drastically changed when Brant was just ten years old, and his biological father passed away following a short, sudden illness (Penick). At a time when women were considered to be dependent on their male counterparts, his mother Margaret had no choice but to move back to her home land of northern New York. Here, the family was submerged in a culture unlike that of what they were accustomed to; these Indians were more engaged with American affairs and wanted each and every inhabitant of the land to be well-educated (Marshall). Shortly after moving in, Lykas, who happened to be a leader of the Mohawk Nation, met Margaret, and they married within the next few months (Penick). In order to concede with Mohawk traditions, Brant adopted a tribal name Thayendanegea which means, "Two sticks bound together for strength" (Penick). Hoping to follow in his stepfather's footsteps, Thayendanegea pursued education with a passion, and he became an influential leader of the Mohawk Nation upon reaching his early twenties.

At the pivotal and uncertain time leading into the American Revolution, the great tribes of upstate New York were positive that unification of their unique traditions would be the only way to ensure the retention of lands and security of all native peoples. What is now known as the Iroquois League of Nations was comprised of the Seneca, Cayuga, Onondaga, Oneida, and Mohawk tribes (Soodalter). Due to the vast areas and populous natures of the tribes, there were leaders elected to speak on behalf of each association during times of conflict. Although most of these leaders tended to be more vocal and offensive, the leader of the Mohawk tribe Thayendanegea was a reserved, charismatic individual, which is why he was chosen as the preeminent leader throughout the duration of the war (Soodalter). The alliance of six unique Upstate New York tribes underneath the general and militaristic leadership of Thayendanegea led to the tribes surviving in the face of cultural denouement despite the social, moral, and religious struggles he faced internally.

Heavy social influences from the intimidating omnipresence of the English led the Iroquois League of Nations to side against the American colonist faction (Marshall).<sup>15</sup> In hopes of receiving riches and new lands to add to each of the unique tribe's empires, the Iroquois League of Nations decided, as an entity, to be loyal to the English cause. Soon after pledging their allegiance, the Mohawk Indians sent Thayendanegea and a league of soldiers into a series of battles. As they traveled from the Mohawk Valley to New York and eventually through

<sup>13</sup> Free Masons are an elite fraternity of men who practice their faith at local lodges. These men are often monotheistic and have been practicing this faith since the early fourteenth century.

<sup>14</sup> Friendship

<sup>15</sup> A divine power present everywhere one turns.

Pennsylvania, Thayendanegea warned not only his men, but also other Indian tribes he encountered of what an American colonist victory would entail from a British standpoint (Marshall).

Soon after embarking on a horse-back trek across the northern tier states, the Iroquois Indians gathered more advanced weaponry from their British allies and began their attacks on American colonist soldiers (Soodalter). In addition to being armed with traditional weaponry such as bows, clubs, and spears, they were also equipped with more contemporary guns as well (Soodalter). After collecting a large arsenal of weapons and other necessary supplies, the Iroquois Indians prepared to spend months away from their families and reached the Cherry Valley on November 11, 1778 (Soodalter). As they began to maneuver through the wilderness terrain of southern New York during the treacherous conditions that accompanied November, a few of the Iroquois Indian fighters opened fire on unsuspecting American colonist soldiers chopping wood along the outskirts of the fort at Cherry Valley. Unlike other villagers living nearby, the American colonist soldiers wore red undershirts with red button-up jackets (Soodalter). Upon seeing the red attire, the Iroquois Indians began to fire at the men and clouds of thick smog filled the air while blood drained from the lifeless bodies of the soldiers cluttering the grassy field. Unfortunately, as the smoke cleared, the Iroquois Indians saw one injured man scurry down the dirt road to the fort, foiling the surprise attack (Soodalter). Upset, Joseph Brant scolded his men and reminded them of how detrimental these types of mistakes were towards their efforts (Soodalter). Even though Joseph Brant maintained a calm demeanor most of the time, his thirst for victory made him criticize any men who put the greater good of the Iroquois Nation in jeopardy.

Following the premature fire on American colonist soldiers along the outskirts of Fort Cherry, Thayendanegea and his army of soldiers from an assortment of tribes advanced towards the interior of the quaint village surrounding the larger fort. Although the Iroquois Indians wanted to be seen as a united front, as they approached Fort Cherry, their diversification became more apparent than ever (Soodalter). Traditionally, the Mohawk Indian culture emphasizes the value of human life and harmony. Thus, while Thayendanegea and those from his Mohawk tribe focused on solely eliminating American colonists who served a militaristic or political role, those from other tribes, like the Seneca, brutally attacked anyone they encountered (Soodalter). Even more, those who were killed at Fort Cherry by the Seneca Indians were not simply shot or stabbed; most of the victims were women and children who were mutilated beyond recognition (Soodalter).<sup>16</sup> Among other injuries, the most commonly sustained was a crushed skull by a tomahawk<sup>17</sup> and a later scalping<sup>18</sup> (Soodalter). For the Iroquois Nation, scalping victims provided proof of power over a weaker opponent. All in all, the massacre that unfolded on that

<sup>16</sup> The infliction of violent injuries.

<sup>17</sup> An axe used as a tool or weapon by Native Americans.

<sup>18</sup> It is the process of cutting off the top portion of one's head as a trophy or symbol of victory over an opponent.

cold, unfortunate November evening was so heinous that Thayendanegea denied his participation until the day he died (Soodalter).

As the Iroquois Indians progressed towards the fort at Cherry Valley, they were met by American colonist soldiers who were far better equipped and equally dedicated to their undertakings (Soodalter). A rain and snow mixture began to fall as the Iroquois Indians topped the hills surrounding Fort Cherry. Even though the fort was in the center of a small, rural village, it was considerable in size. As a matter of fact, the fort was guarded by a 300-man garrison at all times, and the concrete walls reached higher than 100 feet along the exterior (Soodalter).<sup>19</sup> While the men who worked the artillery along the tops of the colossal walls were secure, those who guarded the ground risked losing their lives anytime an invasion occurred.<sup>20</sup> So, whenever an attack was imminent, the American colonist soldiers were instructed to avoid combat and hurry back inside the confines of the fort. Thus, just as the Iroquois Indians made their way to the outer walls of the fort, commander of the colonist ground troops, Colonel Ichabod Alden attempted to retreat back to the fort (Soodalter). The gates were closing quickly, and as he sprinted down the gravel pathway to the entrance, for some reason or another, he stopped and turned to face the Iroquois Indian soldiers. Drawing his pistol, he pointed his gun at Thayendanegea and quickly pulled the trigger (Soodalter). Unfortunately, the gun misfired three times, and as Colonel Alden attempted to fire the fourth, hopefully fatal, shot, Thayendanegea came by him on a horse and lodged a tomahawk into the older man's forehead (Soodalter).

Before Colonel Alden took his last breath, the gates to the fort had already closed, and the men within devised a plan. Seeing that the Iroquois Indians had no way of firing their weapons into the fort, the American colonist soldiers took a rather selfish stance. Instead of confronting the Iroquois Indians, they refused to exit the fort until the Indians withdrew from the area (Soodalter). Seeing that there was no hope in capturing the fort or killing any more of the American colonist soldiers, Thayendanegea told his men to leave the village; as he began to walk up the gravel pathway, he was only joined by a handful of men. Unsatisfied, soldiers from the Seneca tribe roamed the village and continued to devastate structures and dismember those who had already been brutally killed (Soodalter). In spite of the fort at Cherry Valley escaping unscathed, the once prosperous village was nothing but flames and embers.

After waiting for several hours outside of the village, each of the Seneca men slowly emerged and joined Thayendanegea. Without saying a word, he led the men back to the campground (Soodalter). Upon reaching the campground, the Indian men began to yell and dance to celebrate their victory over those at Fort Cherry. As the other Iroquois Indian men rejoiced, Thayendanegea secluded himself in a small teepee among the trees. He was disheartened by the cruelty of the Seneca people on American Colonists he considered friends (Soodalter). It was at this point when he began to consider the lasting effects war has on those outside of the Iroquois Nation. Even though the American colonists were considered to be of the

<sup>19</sup> Troops stationed around a fortress for security purposes.

<sup>20</sup> Cannons and other large guns

opposing party, he began to see that these people were not monsters – they were family (Soodalter). More than ever before, Thayendanegea needed to turn to his faith. As a Christian, Thayendanegea sometimes felt as if he did not belong in a tribe of Native Americans who did not believe in the exclusiveness of one God or in a God's influence in determining afterlife (Marshall). These differences led to discrepancies as to what constituted as a justifiable death during times of warfare among members of the Iroquois Indian Nation. Sadly, Thayendanegea had to be quite mum about his religious affiliations and only shared them with his immediate family; if he had practiced his faith openly, he could have been exiled or killed (Marshall).

As most people know today, the American colonists won the American Revolution and claimed thousands of acres of sacred Iroquois Indian territories. Thus, following the conclusion of the war, Thayendanegea established a reservation in Canada where his people would be able to raise their families without fear of being harmed or moved ("Joseph Brant"). After leading his most dedicated followers to Canada and establishing a settlement, he lived a relatively simple life with his four wives and numerous children. Throughout the years, he still openly voiced his concerns and was a leader to all within his community. As Thayendanegea lay dying in his longhouse<sup>21</sup>, he spoke his final words, which serve as an excellent illustration of how necessary servitude was within his community: "If you have any influence with the great, endeavor to use it for their good" (Soodalter). Even after his death, he has continued to inspire not only military leaders, but also those of all backgrounds, and he has proved that one's work does not die with them, but it lasts for an eternity.

<sup>21</sup> This is a housing unit common among Iroquois Indians.

# 1800-1900

## Friend or Foe Hunter Woodie

John M. Needham (1841-1882): Born in Grainger County, Tennessee, he moves to Polk County, Missouri where he meets his wife Matilda Dodson in 1862. While in Missouri he becomes a private in the Company E, Eighth Regiment Missouri Calvary during the Civil War. He was in service from 1861 to the spring of 1865, when he was mustered out in Springfield, Missouri.

Outnumbered, the Sixth, Seventh, and Eighth Missouri State Militia Calvary pushed forward into battle. The untrained men in their sloppy formation prepared to face the vicious Confederate fighters, terrified of what they would see and what they would have to do. No longer were they boys helping out at their family farms, but fighting for the Union. All of them, with great courage, fought for their lives, having rather died than surrendered to the Confederates.

Tension was abundant in Missouri during the Civil War; this was due to the state being on the border, stuck between the Confederacy and the Union. The slave state could not decide which side they would join.<sup>22</sup> They had their star on both flags, had two governments, and sent soldiers and supplies to both sides.<sup>23</sup> This caused a war within the state along with the national war. Civilians were overcome with fear; anyone from the man walking down the street to the next door neighbor could be a rebel, and could attack at any moment. There was even a group called bushwhackers that supported the Confederates but were not officially part of them.<sup>24</sup> Because of this they didn't wear uniforms and blended in with other citizens. They would typically hide in the woods or forests before they would attack.<sup>25</sup> It was hard for the Union to defeat them because of their civilian clothes. Eventually, Missouri made all traitors to the Union register their name and give up their weapons before promising not to be involved in any rebel activity.<sup>26</sup> This interstate war highlighted the "Brother against Brother" aspect of the Civil War, since neighbors, friends, and families were fighting against each other.<sup>27</sup> John is an example of this, since his family lived in Tennessee, Virginia, and North Carolina, all of which were Confederate states. Although he never physically had to fight against them there was still tension between the family during and after the war.

These rebels are the reason the Eighth Missouri State Militia Cavalry came together in 1861, along with many other militias in the United States during the Civil War. The militias helped by fighting local battles. Since the Confederate and the Union armies were both low on soldiers and supplies at the beginning and they would fight alongside of the armies whenever

<sup>22</sup> "Missouri Civil War." Civil War Traveler: Missouri. N.p., n.d. Web. 05 Feb. 2016.

<sup>23</sup> "Abstract of Wars & Military Engagements: War of 1812 through World War I." Missouri Digital Heritage. N.p., n.d. Web. 6 Feb. 2016.

<sup>24</sup> Kozikowski, Kara E. "Guerrilla Warfare: Hometown Heroes and Villains." *Council on Foreign Relations*. Council on Foreign Relations, n.d. Web. 04 Feb. 2016.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> "Abstract of Wars & Military Engagements"

<sup>27</sup> Kozikowski.

they were in their state to increase their number of soldiers, their main purpose was to prevent Confederate guerrillas, raiders, and recruiters in their state.<sup>28</sup> This was easier for the militias to do than the army, since they stayed local and therefore knew the land better.<sup>29</sup> One problem with the militias that weakened their force was that the soldiers and officers most likely had no military training.<sup>30</sup> This could cause battles to be chaotic with the soldiers having no discipline and officers unable to train them properly, especially when multiple groups of militias fought together, since there was no clear leader.<sup>31</sup> The militias mainly fought in small skirmishes but there were a couple of battles, like the Battle of Lone Jack.

The Battle of Lone Jack, in Jackson County, Missouri started August 15, 1862 when the Union tried to take control of the border back from Confederate bushwhackers.<sup>32</sup> Many Union men were wounded or disappeared while on guard. The rebel supporters interfered with militias' communication and travel and stole supplies and weapons, essentially isolating and weakening them.<sup>33</sup> The Confederates growing power frightened Missouri Union supporters and empowered the Confederates. Around 700 soldiers arrived late at night on the 15<sup>th</sup> setting up camp in the middle of the streets in town.<sup>34</sup> Their commander told them to fire a few cannons to the assumed enemy line. A gunfight ensued and friendly fire killed or wounded a few of the troops, but they succeeded in scaring of the Confederates stationed there.<sup>35</sup> However the troops did not know that a larger force of rebels was coming and the noise of the cannons warned the bushwhackers and the other Confederate soldiers of the Unions location. The rebels then prepared to descend on the Unions for an early morning attack.<sup>36</sup>

At 4 A.M. on the 16<sup>th</sup> the men were quickly awakened when the rebel forces surrounded the camp. Being outnumbered, with the Confederates having about 3,200 men or a five to one ratio, the rebels opened fire from behind the brush, and the Indiana Battery returned the fire.<sup>37</sup> The firefight continued for twenty minutes, being the downfall of many of the Union men. The militias were overpowered and pushed back, that way the Rebels could successfully take their battery. When their leader tried to take it back, he was mortally wounded and a new commander had to take over. His first order was to send two companies of the Eighth Regiment to be skirmishers. They would attract attention and fire away from the main group, while also firing at the rebels. One group did not go, but the other made it to the cornfield the rebels were hiding in and scattered them. By the time they had retaken the battery, many men had been wounded or

<sup>28</sup> Satin, Allan D. "Understanding the Militia of the Northern States, 1861-1865." Web.

<sup>29</sup> Johnston, Joe. "A Flag for the Militia." History Happens Here. Missouri History Museum, 1 May 2012. Web. 06 Feb. 2016.

<sup>30</sup> "Military." *State Organized Militia in the Civil War*. N.p., n.d. Web. 04 Feb. 2016.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> O'Bryan, Tony. "Civil War on the Western Border: The Missouri-Kansas Conflict, 1854-1865." Battle of Lone Jack. Kansas City Public Library, n.d. Web. 05 Feb. 2016.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Constatine. "The Battle of Lone Jack." Daily Missouri Republican [Saint Louis] 28 Aug. 1862: n. pag. Lone Jack Historical Society. Web. 08 Feb. 2016.

killed. The Rebels had a higher position on the hill that allowed them to use sharpshooters to knock down the Union militiamen.<sup>38</sup> The battery again, was captured by the enemies and then recaptured causing many fatalities and wounds. With no more ammunition and fewer and fewer fighters, they had no choice but to retreat. Waving their flag and leaving their battery and wounded men behind, they swiftly left the battlefield, thankful that they lived through the battle.<sup>39</sup>

The battlefield was described as a "bloody one."<sup>40</sup> Everywhere you stepped there was death. There were, "brains scattered everywhere," men without heads, and bodies with "bowels protruding through their death wounds."<sup>41</sup> If they weren't dead they were begging for their lives or going crazy with delirium. The town of Lone Jack was destroyed with the Confederate victory. And only 400 of the Union men returned home, including John Needham, always remembering the gory battle they fought that day.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

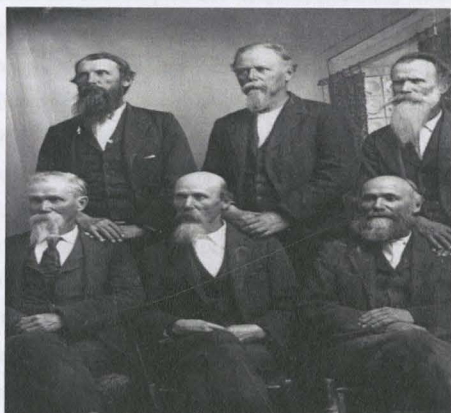
<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> O'Bryan.

## Brothers in the Civil War

### Jakob Holt

Clemmons "Clement" Norman my Fifth Great Grandfather [b. 1802, Mitchells River, Surry County, NC, USA. Married Anna Catherine Wolff (b. Dec. 20, 1809 d. Jan. 21, 1851) July 12, 1828, Surry County, NC, USA d. Aug. 21 1886, Surry County, NC, USA] from this marriage came six sons and two daughters. The three sons I will be writing about are my Fourth great grandfather Lacy Jasper Norman (b. Feb. 8, 1829, Surry County, NC, USA. d. Dec. 10, 1891, Surry County, NC, USA.) the first born and his brother, William Marion Norman (b. Oct. 14, 1833, Mitchells River, Surry County, NC, USA. d. Jun. 6, 1905, Surry County, NC, USA.) the third child of Clement and Anna, and Matthew Norman (b. 1841, Surry County, NC, USA. d. Sep. 25, 1917 Surry County, NC, USA), Lacy and Williams Brother, were all in the Civil War (1861-1865) and were captains for the Confederate Army. Most of the information below is from William's biography, "A portion of my life."



"6 sons of Clement Norman & Anna Catherina Wolff: Seated L to R, Lacy J., Meredith T., William M. Standing L to R: Frederick W., Matthew H., Jackson" Photo From "A Portion of My Life"

Clement and Anna Norman both farmed on their modest farm on Mitchell's river in Surry County. Due to Clement's lack of education and the hard labor throughout his life, he saw it necessary for his sons to get an education. He wanted an easier and more lucrative life for his six sons, so he encouraged each of them to get an education to hopefully achieve this goal. The brothers received schooling in all the possible schools in Surry County and then William even went into Virginia to seek his higher education. Both Lacy and his brother William volunteered to the service of the Confederate States of America in the fighting of the Civil War in May of 1861.

Being raised on a small farm in Surry County, Lacy and William's options for success were limited. They went to school in Rockford and other local towns, whenever their father could spare them from working on the farm. Lacy's aspirations were teaching and politics while William's aspirations were practicing law and traveling. After finishing his education in Surry County, Williams's options were exhausted in furthering his education. William walked from

their quaint farm on Mitchells River to Hillsville in order to seek a higher level of education. William returned home for a break in his schooling and upon his return to Hillsville, his brother Lacy decided to join him to further his education as well.

Lacy achieved his goal of being a teacher, and he successfully opened and operated several schools in the area. William also achieved his goals; he traveled to the western states in August of 1855, and became a lawyer in 1860. William began his career out of school by teaching in various locations near Surry County. He also taught in several different states during his travels to the western states of the United States of America as a means of obtaining money for his travels. William returned from his journey west in May of 1858, and in the fall of his return he began studying to be a lawyer. Lacy taught school until he volunteered for the army in 1864, and William, after he obtained his degree in 1860, practiced law until 1864 when he volunteered.

Lacy and William were among many who were from Surry County to volunteer on behalf of the Confederate States of America. In May of 1861 the militias of Surry County met at the Dobson courthouse to discuss volunteering to assist the Confederate States in the conflict with the Union. Of the men involved in this meeting, Lacy<sup>43</sup>, William and another brother Matthew, volunteered their service (Norman, 117). William entered the Confederate Military and his company, of the two from Surry County, was attached to the 22<sup>nd</sup> regiment<sup>44</sup> (Norman, 123). Upon his entering in the 22<sup>nd</sup>, William was an officer and shortly thereafter his superior resigned due to a sickness. He was then was promoted to Lieutenant. In September of 1861, the 28<sup>th</sup> regiment<sup>45</sup> was created from soldiers within company A. William was voted the captain of the 28th regiment by his peers. Lacy was also a Captain in the Civil War, but he was the Captain of Company B, the other company from Surry County, and he was in the 2<sup>nd</sup> North Carolina Infantry (Gates).

After many hard fought battles, William was captured and taken as a prisoner of war by the Union Army around the Fifth of November 1863 while on duty near Kellysford, Virginia (Norman, 199). He was taken to Johnson's Island in Lake Erie for the term of his capture until his release, at the end of the war in 1865. (Norman, 202) While in prison, William became reunited with his brother Matthew for a short time during Matthew's stay at Johnsons Island while Matthew was being transferred to another war prison.<sup>46</sup>

At the end of the war, William was released from the prisoner of war camp on Johnsons Island in Lake Erie. Upon his release he had no way home and was brought to the mainland and had to walk home. After three and a half long months, William finally made it home from the prison, and after four long years he finally made it home from the war. When he came home, William did not resume his practicing law due to his failing health. He did however become a

<sup>43</sup> Detailed information in Williams book was very limited pertaining to his brother Lacy and only mentions him being a captain.

<sup>44</sup> The 22<sup>nd</sup> regiment was part of Company A

<sup>45</sup> The 28<sup>th</sup> regiment was also called "The Surry Regulators"

<sup>46</sup> Matthew joined the Confederate Army after his two brothers and was captured as a prisoner of war.

small farmer, surveyor and, justice of the peace, his health never fully recovered (Norman, VII). Upon returning home, Lacy resumed teaching and politics. Lacy was then elected to Clerk of Superior Court in Surry County, North Carolina and was committed fully to politics.<sup>47</sup> Lacy Norman was also a very religious man; he was a charter member of the Dobson First Baptist Church. (Gates) These men led very interesting lives before, during, and after the Civil War. They were all successful captains during the war, and they all made it home.



The photo on the left is of Lacy Norman and what I think is his wife. The photo on the right is of William in his confederate uniform. From "A Portion of My Life"

<sup>47</sup> All the brothers had some involvement with politics and three were Democrats and three were Republicans.

## The Pineda Legacy Kerry Aguilera- Pineda

Jose de la Luz Pineda (abt 1868-?. Unknown D.O.B., baptized abt. May 31, 1868): Great Great Grandfather.

No record of marriage/s. Lived in the *Municipio de Coyuca de Catalan* in Guerrero, Mexico.

Carlos Pineda (abt. 1895-1990); married Andrea Avilez around 1931. Great Uncle.

With major events, such as the American Civil War, happening during the mid 1800s. It is easy to miss the lives and stories of common folk who played minimal or no roles at all in these major historical events. Jose de la Luz Pineda was one of these common folk, except he was not very common.

During the 1800s Mexico was largely rural and relied heavily on agriculture. Most Mexicans lived in poverty without employment and wealth was measured by how much cattle and land an individual had. Jose de la Luz had many cattle and owned lots of land in various parts of the state of Guerrero, Mexico. He had adobe *Haciendas*<sup>48</sup> wherever he had cattle and growing fields which gave the people who lived near those areas a place to work. Jose de la Luz would employ them as *piones*<sup>49</sup> to work his fields and take care of his cattle and was always talked about in glorious terms by his workers. From what is known, Jose de la Luz had an *Hacienda* with a rancho in the towns of *Patambo*, *Placeres*, *Paso de Arena*, *Las Juntas del Rio Frio* and *Las Mesas de Pineda*<sup>50</sup>. In each town he also had a mistress and children that would live in his *Hacienda*, so he did not really marry. A very unusual practice at the time. It is not sure how he managed so many lands, and women, in his lifetime but there is speculation that he stayed at each town for around two weeks or more and then left to another.

It is said that the town of *Las Mesas de Pineda* was a result of Jose de la Luz Pineda's doing. Since he hired *piones* that needed a job but also lived a bit far away, he would often times build houses for them around his home and have their families live with them. It was because of Jose de la Luz's *piones* that the town was established and named after him, hence the *de Pineda* in the town's name. Today, the town only holds the *corral de piedras*<sup>51</sup> that Jose used to keep his trading cattle in. Similarly, very little traces are left of his *Haciendas* in other towns. *Patambo* is the only town with the most noticeable piece of property that use to belong to Jose de la Luz Pineda. It is presently being occupied by Esperanza Pineda, granddaughter of Roberto Pineda who was one of the many sons that Jose de la Luz Pineda had.

<sup>48</sup> A large landed estate, especially one used for farming or ranching.

<sup>49</sup> Worker or workers that cultivated the land. They were often paid in cash or meals.

<sup>50</sup> The towns in which Jose de la Luz Pineda had land and cattle. All the towns are registered under the municipal of Coyuca de Catalan, Guerrero, Mexico.

<sup>51</sup> Spanish for corral of stone. It was mostly used for animals that were going to be traded or killed.



This is a photograph of Las Mesas de Pineda taken in 2006.

Just like in *Patambo* Roberto took care of his father's land, Jose de la Luz's sons in different towns also took it into their hands to watch over the lands left by their father. In *Las Mesas de Pineda*, Roberto's half-brothers, Carlos, Maurilio, Marcelo and Eleuterio (all sons of Jose de la Luz) managed the *Hacienda* and the *corral de piedra*. While Jose de la Luz was alive, the boys would work in the fields for their father. They all worked except for Carlos.

Carlos Pineda was the oldest of the children that Jose de la Luz Pineda had with Rafaela Balboa, who was his mistress in *Las Mesas de Pineda*, and went to fight alongside the Revolutionaries at the start of the war. Carlos was only about fifteen years old. Not much is known about how many battles he fought but he was gone for roughly some months helping the Southern army of Zapata fight the forces of Diaz<sup>52</sup>. After he returned, he continued his life as he had before the start of the Mexican Revolution but found himself with a whole new problem at home.

As the story goes, Carlos was home one drizzly morning in bed. He had gotten sick and could hardly sit up. Some of the cattle broke free, something that was quite common because the fences were not properly built to restraint many cattle, and so Carlos, being the oldest of the four boys, had to herd the cows back into the corral. He had forced himself out of bed and went after the animals. The grass was pretty tall since they had not chopped it down yet and since in previous days it had rained, it was wet. Carlos managed to get all the cattle back into the corral. But he caught a fever from the wet grass and became greatly ill. His step-mother, Adelajda Sosa, tried curing him with home remedies but nothing seemed to work. Carlos had even said that he could no longer feel his legs. Finally, they decided that it was time for him to see a doctor. They went on horseback because the nearest doctor at the time was in Mexico City which was approximately 340 km away and took about 73 hours walking to reach the city (Google Maps). When they finally reached the city, the doctor told them that Carlos had gotten an infection in his feet and that it was too late to cure him. There was no other option but to cut Carlos' legs off. His right foot was cut just below the knee and his left foot right below the ankle. This did not stop Carlos. Even though there were no wheelchairs at the time, Carlos managed to keep working and

<sup>52</sup> Zapata is considered one of the greatest revolutionary heroes that fought against the tyrannical powers of Diaz, who had been in power for over 30 years (Greenspan).

caring for his relatives. He spent most of his time on horseback to move around and hardly ever came down. Carlos lived to be around 95 years of age and finally died around 1990 in *Las Mesas de Pineda*.



## The Adventures of Daniel Solomon Speight

### Brianna Speight

Daniel Solomon Speight was a sheriff in Stanly County, North Carolina. Daniel was the great-grandfather of Dan Ernest Speight, and great-great-grandfather of Dan Ernest Speight Jr., my father, thus making Daniel my great-great-great grandfather (Speight, Personal interview). Daniel Speight was sometimes referred to as Dan or Daniel Solomon and was born December 8, 1870, and died August 21, 1953. He married Mary Catherine Eudy, with whom he had eleven children. One of which died as a child (Short, 70). Most of the following information originates from the newspaper article "Alec Whitley was Lynched Here", from *The Salisbury Post*. This article is found in the manuscript *The Speight Family of Stanly County*.

Over the course of hundreds of years, our lives have become much different than that of our earliest ancestors, and as we continue to advance science and technology, the changes in life are becoming greater faster. Not only is science and technology evolving every day, but also, morals and customs and the way in which we approach certain things, like crime and punishment, are changing. Even as late as the 1890s, hanging was a primary form of punishment for many crimes, even if the offense was not all that severe. Today, however, we have a debate as to whether putting someone to death as punishment for the most severe crime, murder, is moral or not. This is a primary example of how much we have changed over the years, so it is interesting to think about the people whom we have come from and what their lives were like in contrast to ours. While researching my ancestry, I discovered that there are quite interesting members of everyone's families, and that researching your family past is something everyone should do at some point. During my research, I discovered that the first person to come to North America with the last name Speight was a man by the name of Francis Speight, who arrived in 1635 in Jamestown (Speight 5). Following him, there were several Speights with variations of the name spelling, which makes it a little difficult to track who was related, however, during my research I found some more recent interesting characters that I can directly track from my own living and recently passed family. Of these ancestors, I discovered the story of Daniel Solomon Speight.

Daniel Solomon Speight was born to a twenty-one year-old William Alexander Speight and a fourteen-year-old Sarah Rebecca Harkey on December 8, 1870 (Short 70). Daniel was born and raised in Stanly County, North Carolina with eight other siblings. For the first several years of Daniel's life, his family was very poor because Sarah was not of age to receive her share of her family's estate and William did not have much money to trade with. The family's only valuables were their farm crops, livestock, and furniture. It took many years for the young family to even own property, and just when they thought they were doing well on money, Daniel's father was accused of having relations with a woman besides his wife and went through a trial. This happened twice within the next two years, one of which resulted in an annual fee of ten dollars to the accusing woman to support the child that was supposed to be William's (Short 70).

Since Daniel was old enough to understand what was happening in the trial at this time, this may be the reason for Daniel's career choice. Daniel grew up to become a part-time sheriff in Stanly in the late 1880s and wound up making history.

It all started with a reckless man named Alec Whitley<sup>53</sup>, who had been known for not following the rules or laws and for going on "mysterious journeys" which usually led to mischief. Alec started out with small crimes that progressively got larger and more advanced as he got older. Many of the people living in Stanly at the time knew better than to outright accuse Whitley of anything, because he'd put a target on their back and make their life a lot more difficult (Short 71). For instance, Alec once burned a man's barn to the ground for accusing him of a petty theft. After an incident in which someone had publicly accused Alec Whitley of something, he snuck into that farmer's property with a buddy and made off with all of the farmer's cash (Thomas). Officers investigating the incident, including Daniel Speight, discovered that one set of footprints had a heart in the sole of the boots, and when they tracked down Alec Whitley, their primary suspect, so did his. Alec and his accomplice, Bud Cagle, were arrested, posted bond and assigned a trial date, but only a few days before the trial, Alec's accomplice disappeared never to be heard or seen again (Thomas). That wasn't the only thing though; the last person he was seen with was none other than Alec Whitley.

Several months passed by with no word or sign of Alec's accomplice, and the word around town was that the man had been murdered. One day, someone came across what looked to be human bones in the woods, and seeing as it was a small community, many people believed these bones to be those of Bud Cagle, Alec's accomplice (Thomas). During this time there wasn't a way to identify bones, so there was never any proof that these were the remains of Bud Cagle, but that didn't change the town's mind. In the minds of Stanly residents, it was decided that Alec had murdered Bud, so when Alec was arrested shortly after the discovery by Deputy Daniel Speight, they were excited. The reason for his arrest, however, was not for the suspected murder, but for another incident.

As it turns out, during this gap, Alec had gone to Arkansas, where he murdered a man by cutting off his feet and forcing him to walk on the stumps until he died. In addition to this horrific crime, Alec also robbed and dissected the victim. Ironically enough though, Bert Tucker, the man Alec killed, was from Stanly county and was easily missed. In Arkansas they found the body of Bert and in their investigation found the heart heels footprints. The investigations soon uncovered a woman who knew of the murder and was able to provide them with evidence against Alec Whitley. They quickly sent word to Stanly and hoped that Alec wouldn't disappear in the thousands of miles between the two departments. The sheriff's office in Stanly received the news that Alec was a murderer, and was ordered to arrest him if he was found. They then quickly started their own investigation. Well, come to find out, a local man in Stanly had communicated with Alec, and he was planning on returning to Stanly to kill Daniel and some

<sup>53</sup> Alec Whitley was the primary name given for this man, but in some references the name is misspelt to read *Alex* Whitley.

other officers. So, the sheriff's office set up a search for him. Nonetheless, Daniel Speight found him headed into town through the woods. Alec was then arrested and sent to the local jail, whereupon he would then be transferred to Arkansas for trial of murdering Bert Tucker; but Alec was also under suspicion, by the people of Stanly, for the murder of Bud Cagle, his long lost accomplice. Since Daniel was the sheriff on duty the day of Alec's arrest<sup>54</sup>, he was to guard the inmate's cell until the transfer was made and new evidence of the suspected Bud Cagle case was found. The locals of Stanly County were pretty fed up with Alec by this point and ready for justice for all the problems that he'd caused them, so they crowded up at the jail and harassed Deputy Daniel Speight for the keys to Alec's cell. Daniel refused, knowing the mob that had formed wanted bloodshed, but it was no use. Before long, the mob overcame Daniel and his weapon and proceeded to break Alec out of the cell. They worked and worked, sawing through the steel bars, holding back Deputy Daniel until they finally had Alec out. The mob then shackled Alec and threw him in a heavily guarded wagon to be served what they felt he deserved (Thomas).

Within a matter of hours of Alec Whitley's arrest, the mob had moved him to the edge of town, deputies chasing them the entire way. There was no way the deputies could stop what the mob had their hearts set on; there weren't enough deputies to control the angry citizens, and the citizens weren't the only ones fed up with Alec. Most people in the mob had already agreed that since Alec had murdered someone, he deserved the highest form of punishment: hanging. Until this point, there had never been a lynching in Stanly county, but on June 8<sup>th</sup>, 1892, Alec Whitley changed that; he was hung from a red oak tree for the crime of murdering Bert Tucker, and the (suspected) murder of Bud Cagle, as well as for death threats, larceny, arson, and other crimes (Short, pp. 71). It seemed as though the town had finally found its peace, but there were still many unanswered questions about Alec and what exactly he did. After all, no one knew if he murdered Bud Cagle or if Cagle had turned wise and ran away from the crazy man. One thing was for sure in the minds of the townspeople though; Alec got what he deserved for such a brutal murder of Bert Tucker, as well as for all the other problems he'd caused them.

This, wasn't the first or last of the crazy stories Daniel took part of. However, when he talked about this one, he apparently didn't believe that Alec had murdered Bud Cagle due to something Alec muttered<sup>55</sup> just before he was hanged (Thomas). It seems though, that Daniel must have had a pretty good conscience because he resisted handing over the cell keys for the lynching of a man. It may never be known if Alec Whitley actually committed all the crimes he was accused of, but it is confirmed that he robbed, tortured, and killed Bert Tucker and was the only person to ever be lynched in Stanly County, North Carolina.

The Speight family has had its fair share of interesting stories and family members, but the story of Daniel Speight and Alec Whitley is one of the most unusual. This story really makes

<sup>54</sup> It is not clear how many days were between Alec Whitley's arrest and his hanging. For more information, see *The Speight Family of Stanly County*, pp. 70-71 or pp. 92-93.

<sup>55</sup> It was never documented what Alec Whitley said before he was hanged.

the point that while we may feel hundreds of years apart from our ancestors, often times there are only fifty or so years separating our current time, and our ancestor's death. In the case of Daniel Speight, only sixty-three years separate the death of a man who witnessed the only lynching in Stanly County, and the world we live in now. Today, lynching is completely illegal and some states no longer issue the death sentence by lethal injection because the morality of it is questionable. This goes to show that while it feels as though we are separated significantly from our ancestors through time and tradition, we are often more connected to them than we will ever know.

## Backwoods Murder

### Jade Hazelwood

John Jack Mays was born in the late 1850s. He lived in the backwoods of Mount Airy, North Carolina. He owned a small farm, and was known as a much respected churchman in his community. In June of 1898, Mays was accused of murdering his wealthy, widowed 70 year old neighbor, Martha Thompkins Higgins. In November of that year, he was convicted and sentenced to death. He was hanged the same month at the age of 40. The hanging took place where the Wells Fargo Bank is now located. His hanging was the last ever legal hanging in Surry County. Most of the information in the narrative below was acquired in a face-to-face interview with a relative, Tina Lineberry, of Mays and I. Mays was my 6<sup>th</sup> cousin.

During the 1800s, living in the backwoods of Surry County wasn't easy, let alone exciting. There were a few plantation owners here and there, but most of the county's citizens were poor and owned small farms. Life on the farm was very strenuous; farmers depended on every little seed to get them through the year. This was even harder for the poor farmers. They did not always have the money or supplies for the land, so they had to be very self-sufficient ("Life in the 1870s"). Life, being as stressful as it was for the poor, was very straining on one's mental and physical capabilities. At any moment something could go wrong. Many farmers had to deal with broken equipment, shortage of feed, and poor harvest. This put a big damper on the farm life, and many farmers drove themselves crazy.

John Jack Mays knew all about the hardships of being a small town farmer. He wanted the best life he could possibly achieve, but times were tough and money was hard to come by. Growing up in a small town had taught him that nothing comes easy, and hard work is the only sure fire way of getting anything done. Every single day he worked his tail off with little to no reward, but that's what he lived for. He had grown up on a farm; farming was in his blood. In the end, he knew that he had been given this life for a reason. However, at times he felt himself slowly going crazy. He wanted to break free and have a joyful, carefree life, but he did not know how. He kept tilling the land, feeding the cattle, and growing the crops.

After a long day working on the farm, John Jack Mays was determined to have a good night. Forty years living on a farm can do a man in, and he was more than willing to have a little fun. Mays decided to invite a few friends over to play a couple rounds of cards (Lineberry). He knew they would end up drinking a few too many beers, but he was ready for a much needed break from the daily labor he endured. Mays' friends began to arrive just after the sun had set. The group of tired and dirty men were already rounded up and ready for an unforgettable night. They were obnoxiously loud, and the stench of booze burned John's nostrils. This wasn't his normal Friday night routine. He wasn't known for being the "party all night" kind, but he convinced himself that it was time to let loose and enjoy himself. He picked up his beer and toasted to the night unaware of the fatal consequences that would follow.

Later that night, one of Mays' friends conjured up a devious plan. He wanted the men to sneak over to Miss Higgins' place, and see if they could get their hands on any money or valuables (Lineberry). The men knew that Higgins' had accumulated her late husband's military payments, and that she kept them in some jars in her kitchen, so it would be very easy to snatch it ("Last Hanging in Surry County"). Mays was a bit skeptical about the plan at first, but he eventually caved in and decided to help carry it out. The woman was old and would most likely not even notice the little things were missing.

They sat around the table and planned out how they would accomplish such an act without getting caught. They ended up waiting until two in the morning. The men tiptoed to the neighbor's quiet farm house. Mays' peered through the window and noticed that the house looked like a bomb had gone off inside, but there was no sign of the old woman. He gave the rest of the men a signal that the coast was clear, and they made their way inside the house. When inside, one of the men made a comment about how the house looked as if someone had already ransacked it. They shrugged it off and started to quietly look for the infamous mason jars. After rummaging through the messy house, the group found the money and decided to go back to Mays' house. Laughing and having the time of his life, Mays had a clear conscience; it was the first time he had felt so alive, and the feeling was more than addictive.

The party ended around four in the morning, and after everyone had left, Mays decided it was time to get some rest. He was awakened from his slumber by a loud beating on his front door. He angrily looked over at the clock to see that it was well past noon. He had no idea who would be knocking on his door at this time of the day. Groggy from his hangover, Mays made his way to door to find the county Sheriff waiting. Sheriff J.M. Davis informed him that his neighbor, Miss Higgins, had burned to death in her home the previous night, and that he wanted to question him about the whole ordeal ("Last Hanging in Surry County"). Mays' remembered very little of what happened the night before, but he could recall bits and pieces. He told the sheriff that he had a party, and that he and a few friends had broken into the widow's home. Although he could not remember much, he swore up and down that he did not set the house on fire. He then told the sheriff that he had stolen some money from the house and where he could find it. However, rumors that Miss Higgins was first murdered by an axe and the fire was to cover up the murder scene spread quickly in the small town. This caused many citizens to point fingers, especially at Mays. Because of Mays' shaky alibi, the sheriff questioned his testimony.

Sheriff Davis arrested Mays for breaking and entering and stealing the old woman's money (Lineberry). The money was soon recovered on the banks of a nearby creek, but Davis was unable to believe Mays' alibi, so he investigated further into the case ("Last Hanging in Surry County"). Eventually, Mays was convicted of both stealing the money and the murder of Martha Higgins. Many of the citizens and his family believed that Mays was not guilty of murdering the old woman, but they believed he had stolen the money. This caused an uproar within the county, but to no avail; Mays was sentenced to death.

On November 11, 1898, John Jack Mays' was transported to the site of the upcoming hanging. A huge group of both citizens and noncitizens (people who had heard of the conviction) gathered around to witness the accused murderer's final moment. Mays, knowing he was not guilty of the murder, tried pleading for his life; however, the city of Mount Airy had already made its mind up and held no remorse. As the noose was being wrapped around his neck, anger arose in Mays. He was facing fatal consequences to a crime he did not commit. He looked up at the crowd of silent bystanders and stated his final words, "As long as my name is tainted, grass will never grow on my grave" (Lineberry). And, as his lasts words promised, no grass ever did.

## En la Guerra y en el Amor Todo se Vale

### (All is Fair in Love and War)

April Torres

Holalia Cardenas (best estimate was born in 1888) was a widow and later was remarried to Magdaleno Padron, who was 4 years older than her (est. birth year 1884). They lived together in La Alberca, Villa de Zaragoza, San Luis Potosi, Mexico. The majority of the information found in this essay comes from an interview with Alicia Torres, who is Holalia's granddaughter. Any other source will have a footnote.

Holalia had faced many hardships throughout adolescence and early adulthood. Like many other women in the rural towns of Villa de Zaragoza in San Luis Potosi, Mexico during the 1910s, she struggled with her identity and her role as a woman, as well as the daily struggles of living in poverty. However, nothing compared to the difficulties she faced after her husband was stabbed to death in a drunken fight at the annual *fiesta patronal*. With her husband gone, Holalia had to tend the farm and care for her seven children alone.

Holalia began each day by waking up the kids that were old enough to help out. They would eat breakfast as a family, and then head out to retrieve water from the communal well, water the maize and beans fields, and milk and feed the cows. Afterwards, she would make cheese and grind the maize to make tortillas. The family lived off of what they grew, and she would sell the leftover cheese, tortillas, or beans in the city. The only day of the week that she didn't work was Sunday. The entire family attended religious services that day. Holalia would wear her cleanest cotton, ankle-length dress, and she would dress her seven children in the best clothes they had. Holalia's family, including her mother and brother, sat together during the services, and afterwards ate together at Holalia's mother's house.

Times were also difficult for the country as a whole. From 1910 onward, global issues, like the Great Depression and World War II, and domestic struggles, such as the Mexican Revolution and uprisings against the Mexican government like the Cristero War, devastated the nation's economy. It made it difficult for families like Holalia's living in an already underdeveloped agrarian economy to make enough money to get by. The conflict that most directly impacted Holalia's daily life was the Cristero War.

The Cristero War, which occurred from 1926 to 1929, was an armed struggle between the Mexican government and militias formed in support of the Catholic Church. At the time, the government increased control over the churches, targeting the Catholic Church in particular, in order to limit church participation.<sup>56</sup> The constitution that was implemented in 1917 stated it was unlawful for the Church to own real estate, to include public issues in religious press, and for

<sup>56</sup> "The Cristero War." *Explorando Mexico*. n.p., n.d. Web. 20 January 2016. For more general information there is a *Wikipedia* page on the Cristero War. There's also a *Wikipedia* page on the persecution of Christians in Mexico.

members of the clergy to vote.<sup>57</sup> The government would decide where and how many churches there should be, and there was to be no involvement of religion in schools.<sup>58</sup> Nine years later, President Plutarco Elias Calles added to the constitution obligating Catholic ministers to marry.<sup>59</sup> Holalia's brother was one of the thousands of men who supported the militia.

It was during this struggle that armed men frequently stormed the towns in search of anything of value. When Holalia's average day was interrupted by a messenger on horseback shouting, "Corran pa'l cerro! Escondanse!" it meant she had to drop everything and find refuge in the mountains. She would race towards home, make sure all seven of her children were there, and pack water and blankets. Sometimes they'd spend the night on the mountain waiting for a messenger to assure them the town was safe. Once the messenger came, they could return to their homes and salvage whatever was left of their belongings and crops.

After one particular raid of the town, Holalia encountered an old friend while she made her way back down the mountain. Magdaleno and Holalia had been neighbors during their childhood. As teens, Magdaleno and Holalia expressed a mutual interest in each other. However, Holalia's first husband promised economic security, and she was forced to marry someone else. Strangely enough, Magdaleno had also been married once and had seven children. His wife died a couple of years prior to his reencounter with Holalia. Both were in similar positions and were struggling to support their families. After they reconnected, they wondered if it would be socially acceptable to marry each other.

Remarrying was, and still is, very uncommon in that region primarily because of religion and tradition. Normally, if two adolescents were interested in one another, they would only see each other for minutes at a time at the communal well, or they may get a chance to dance at a festival held by the town. The major form of communication was through letters hidden within a basket of tortillas or left under a rock. After a courtship sometimes lasting years, the suitor would make a proposition to the woman's parents. Only after the wedding would the bride move in with her husband. The only form of marriage was monogamous and heterosexual, of course, and it was seen as a necessity. To be able to live, prosper, and fulfill her duty as a woman, she must get married. No matter the circumstances, divorce was not an option.

Holalia and Magdaleno felt conflicted between honoring their dead spouses and creating a more stable household for their families. In order to do both, they waited for four years until they got married. During that time, the idea of marrying one another transformed from being a logical solution to their problems to something more personal. Unlike her first marriage, Holalia no longer had to protect her purity, but in order to protect her integrity, she did have to keep her budding relationship with Magdaleno quiet. They often wrote to one another and met in secret.

They took a risk once and attended church as a family. They walked together and sat together during the service. Since there were sixteen of them altogether, they took up two whole

pews. When Holalia's mother and brother arrived, there was not enough room. Afterwards, Holalia took her seven children to eat at their grandma's house as usual. While there, Holalia's brother declared his outrage at seeing Holalia with Magdaleno. He said it was disgraceful seeing her with a man, especially in the sacred church. He told her that she wasn't being loyal to her deceased husband. Her mother on the other hand, reminded her brother that Holalia's husband had been dead for years, and encouraged Holalia to find happiness. She told her to marry Magdaleno before he finds someone else, since it would be beneficial for her grandkids.

With her mother's assurance in mind, Holalia and Magdaleno married each other, and joined their families. With the extra help, they were able to prosper. They divided their time and with the extra helping hands from Magdaleno's kids, they were able to grow more maize and beans than previous years. They saved enough money to purchase a radio. Afterwards, their marriage became widely accepted, even Holalia's brother supported it. They later had two children, which means there were sixteen children in one household for a short time.

In their case, the idea of marriage was initially a contract between two people that came with benefits, especially for women. During that time, marrying a man was the only way a woman could sort of own property and gain economic security. However, it also meant sacrificing many personal freedoms, that today many take for granted. Many marriages were usually just two people agreeing to live together and make the best of what they had, but Holalia and Magdaleno were lucky enough to really fall in love. Despite their coming together being atypical, they, unlike other married couples at the time, were happily married and in love.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

# 1900-Present

## War and Explosions in Church

Kaitlin Williams

Andy William White (April 9, 1925- January 11, 2013)

This is a fictional narrative written by me in hopes of understanding how my great uncle Andy might have felt and what he may have experienced from 1943-45 when he served in the U.S. Navy. Even though this story was not written by him he did tell stories to my father, who is also a U.S. Veteran. When Uncle Andy was a gunner, he witnessed the ship next to his get hit by a kamikaze airplane, and when the war ended he threw his uniform off the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco.



As I sit silently amongst the joyful children and my humble wife Flora in the church pews, I cannot help but remember a far less simple time. A time where I did not feel as safe and secure as I do now. The preacher before me starts to speak, but I find it difficult to ignore the intense aroma of the salty pacific and the odor of various burning substances. Before I am able to fight these smells with a minty piece of green gum, my vision follows my nose. The isles are now transforming into the ship deck and the preacher's figure has become a canon launcher.

My hands reach up for my face and to my surprise, the wrinkles around my cheeks and eyes have ceased to exist. I heard something that sounds like a whining car slamming two hundred miles per hour into a steel pole, and my heart and C-rations<sup>60</sup> nearly leap out of my chest and stomach. I am no longer confused, and I know exactly what to do.

This sound was no car, it was a pilot in a kamikaze<sup>61</sup> airplane who had just dived head first into the ship beside the one I am currently wobbling on. They don't call this big hunk of metal Lucky Lou for no reason. Despite the fear that has taken over my mind, I manage to grab a

<sup>60</sup> A canned field ration of the United States Army.

<sup>61</sup> A member of a Japanese air attack corps in World War II assigned to make a suicidal crash on a target.

hold of the weapon in front of me and fire at the future threats buzzing around the ship. I hear the wails of my friends and those who went through the same training as I had back in California. My four brothers are out there fighting this same war, and I wonder if they are all still walking around on this earth. Oh, what I would give to be at home playing card games with my brothers or lying in my warm bed. I just want to curl up in ball and smell the sweet scent of my room and fresh linens. Unfortunately, sometimes in order to really appreciate your situation you must be taken out of your comfort zone. In other words, you don't know what you have until it's gone. And if I want to see the sweet faces of my family again I have to fight, stay alive, and endure the pain.



The picture to the left shows airplanes flying across the ocean as well as bombs exploding during World War II ("USS St. Louis). The picture to the right captures the destruction of the carrier titled Franklin after being hit by two bombs (USS St. Louis)

Explosions continue to fill the sky and sea, leaving behind the most terrifying sounds I have ever heard. In the midst of this chaos I feel a firm hand grip my shoulder and suddenly everything changes. I don't feel so alone. This hand has touched my shoulder many times and each time for the same reason. I am back in church, there are tears in my eyes, and this hand belongs to my nephew Tony. It seems that I have managed to distract everyone in the building and am now the center of unwanted attention.

"Hey Andy, are you feeling okay man? You wanna go outside and get some fresh air?" he asks accompanied with sympathy. I reply with a simple "Yeah", and as we get up to leave the attention is once again taken by the preacher up front. We stand around the front of the Salvation Army<sup>62</sup> near a small tree and somehow small talk our way onto the subject of the U.S.S. St. Louis. "I've heard that she's survived more battles than you can count" said Tony halfway into our conversation.

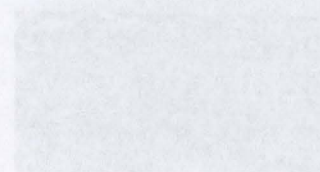
"Yeah. She didn't suffer as much as others that I saw, but she came out with scars. That's for sure."

"You never told me what you did after the war" he says with a curious tone.

I thought about it for a minute or two as he waited patiently and I told him that, "Once I stepped off that ship in San Francisco, me and all of my living buddies tossed our uniforms off

<sup>62</sup> The church that Andy attended on Sundays in Mount Airy.

the Golden Gate Bridge. Never again did I want to wear those clothes or smell that ocean. I never wanted to be a soldier and I did not want to fight. I wanted that uniform off of my body the minute I put it on. A sense of freedom is what I thought I would receive once I was finished fighting for my life, but was left with so many scars on the inside. I had seen things that would terrify most people and wouldn't wish this pain on any of my enemies. Even at home you never really stop fighting and the fear stays with you forever. But even though I cannot forget the past, I am in a better place now with my beautiful Flora and our family. I thank the Lord for them every day."



## The Invasion

### David Sparger

February 3, 1908, my great grandfather, on my mother's side of the family, John Samuel Thomas, was born in Carrol County, Virginia. As he grew older, he became an electrical worker and married Annie Mathis. He was drafted to the Marine Corps March 21<sup>st</sup>, 1944. He became a riflemen and a truck driver during his time in the military. He participated in the invasion of Okinawa and the occupation of Japan also.



Naval fleet under attack

It was getting desperate times for the Americans in World War Two. They knew they had to seize an island off Japan to get an upper hand in the war and possibly end the war. The Americans targeted Okinawa and wanted to work towards the Japanese mainland. The battle consisted of the U.S Marines, Navy, and the Army. Japan had its Army and an insignificant Navy (Frame). The Americans had the upper hand, but they still faced a mighty challenge because the Japanese would not give up. The Japanese had no allies during this time. The Nazis collapsed during the war which left the Japanese with no support (Frame). As the invasion began, the Marines were well prepared for the enemies' tactics (Frame). The Marines were boots on the ground during this bloody war.



Marines invade Okinawa

The island of Okinawa was a difficult task to conquer in itself. The terrain is very mountainous and full of forests. The island is tropical and very humid. The soldiers had to deal with this broiling temperature and also had to fight various diseases endemic to that island. This

gave a huge advantage to the Okinawas because they knew their own territory and had experience with this type of environment (Frame). They used this to their advantage against the Americans by creating tunnels, and fortresses (Frame). The Japanese even used the natural elements around them like coral and limestone as natural cover (Frame).



Map of Okinawa Island

My great-grandfather John Samuel Thomas was in the battle of Okinawa during World War Two. He was in the fourth battalion fifteenth marine's sixth division. According to Lynette Sparger, 3570 troops were killed out of the sixth division during this battle ("John Samuel Thomas"). I discovered through my research that my great grandfather was discharged and sent back to the states according to Lynette Sparger. John Thomas was on patrol and he saw a kid that was Japanese and he looked malnourished. So, my great-grandfather gave him some candy and was caught doing so. The reason this was wrong was that the kid could have had explosives on him which could have killed other soldiers. He was thrown in the brig<sup>63</sup> for this.

The battle of Okinawa was a major event in World War Two and discovering my great-grandfather went through all that is quite remarkable. Realizing that the American troops had to perform such disturbing acts such as killing women and children because of the possibility of them being the enemy. Also, the troops had to overcome the obstacles of the Japanese tactics and fight off diseases in humid island of Okinawa. All these events that took place in Okinawa was for a greater cause and that was to keep the American people safe from harm.

<sup>63</sup> Military prison

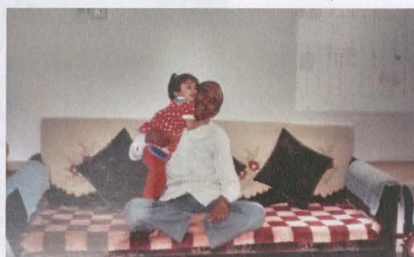


## The Kumbhani Story

Nisha Borad

Natha Kumbhani (January 8, 1939- ) & Labhu Kumbhani (March 15, 1945- )

This is a narrative about my maternal grandparents and will depict what growing up in India was like during this time period. I will to the best of my ability portray their life experiences starting as early as I can and include any obstacles and/or achievements as well as take about their general lifestyles. This narrative takes place in the state of Gujarat which is located in the western part of India. All of the information was retrieved from an interview over the telephone.



In the 1930's and 40's, India was a very different country than it is now. It has come a long way politically, sociologically, and demographically. When my grandparents were growing up, India was still under British ruling and the country was known as "British India." The British *Raj*<sup>64</sup> included not only India, but Pakistan and Bangladesh as well.

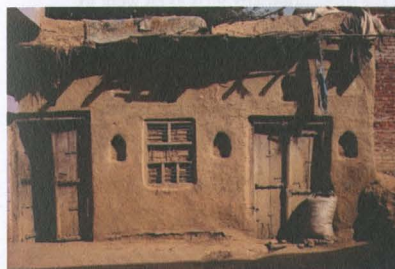
Both of my grandparents were born and raised in Saurashtra, which is the coastal region of Gujarat. Although they grew up in a fairly small region, they lived very different lifestyles. Both of my grandparents came from rather large families; they both had five brothers and two sisters. My *Ba*'s<sup>65</sup> household held eleven people, and my *Dada*'s<sup>66</sup> held twelve. In Indian tradition, it is common that when a man gets married and starts a family, he takes in his parents in order to care for them, almost in gratitude for all the years he was taken care of. So each household included my grandparents as children, their siblings, their parents, and their grandparents. My grandmother's childhood home was very shack-like. It only had one bedroom, one living room, and one kitchen for all eleven of them to share. There were no bathrooms of course, as indoor plumbing was not yet a priority. There were no tiles, carpets, or hardwood floors, but instead the ground was layered with cow manure and the walls were made of dirt. My grandfather lived in a small house as well which wasn't any more spacious than that of my grandmother's; although, his house did have stone floors. A major struggle that my grandpa faced primarily when he was growing up was the lack of money. Financial difficulties were

<sup>64</sup> Meaning "rule" in Hindi

<sup>65</sup> Gujarati meaning of grandmother

<sup>66</sup> Gujarati meaning of grandfather

prominent and inevitable with there being so many people in the house to provide for. His father's job did not paying enough to cover the costs.



There wasn't a lot to do at that time other than go to school and help out at home. If you were a male, the norm was to help with the family farm, which most everyone had. The crops varied by farm though. Some people grew primarily tobacco, while some grew vegetables, but the most famous were the *keri*<sup>67</sup> fields. My *Ba* explained, "If you were a female, you were expected to stay at home and learn to be domestic so that you would be ready for marriage. They said once a girl learned how to cook and clean properly, she was equipped for marriage" (Labhu Kumbhani). In the little free time they did get, my *Dada* liked to play cricket with his neighbors who doubled as friends. It is very common in India that your *padosi*<sup>68</sup> and townspeople are good family friends. Cricket is a very popular sport in India, even today. The sport is most similar to American baseball except the pitcher is called a bowler, and they play with a flat-surfaced bat. The objective of the game is to score as many runs as possible, while the other team fields. My *Dada* says, "It was a favorite hobby among a lot of us. All of the young boys in the neighborhood would come together and meet at a certain and time and place and play cricket for hours and hours. We would play longer than that, but eventually it would get dark and our mothers would yell at us to come back in" (Natha Kumbhani). *Ba* preferred a different way to pass time. She enjoyed playing hide and seek, as well as skipping stones at a nearby stream. She recalls, "My siblings and I would run all over the house playing hide and seek and sometimes get a bit carried away and fall. Our clothes would be ruined due to the manure-made floors and *Mummy* would yell at us to stop. We would then take ourselves down to the stream, wash off our dirty clothes to the best of our ability and pass time by skipping stones" (Labhu Kumbhani). Though they had fun when given the chance, most of their days were spent at school.

The schools my grandparents went to were not coeducational and were separated by gender. *Ba* really enjoyed reading and would even say that it was her favorite subject. *Dada* was interested in arithmetic and politics. Although they were both fond of school, *Ba* only went to school until the third grade because she had to help out at home with washing clothes, milking the cows, helping on the farm. My grandpa finished school and even went to college. He studied economics and politics and graduated from a government school with his bachelor's degree. He went on to work a clerical job for the government and did that his whole life until he reached the

<sup>67</sup> Gujarati word for mango

<sup>68</sup> Gujarati word for neighbors

age of retirement. Ba would have furthered her education if it had been possible, but she said, “There was no opportunity. All of the colleges were out of town, and girls weren’t allowed to go so far out due to safety reasons. Not only that, but at the time, not many girls even went to college. Most of us were just expected to be housewives” (Labhu Kumbhani).

The next step for many at this stage, including my grandparents, was marriage. For the girl, she was ready to marry once she was fully domesticated and/or had a suitor. For the boy, usually it was after he finished his schooling. Arranged marriages were the only way people got married during this time period, and divorces were extremely rare. People have such variations when it comes to the meaning of arranged marriage. They were very strict and different back then compared to how lenient and almost unconventional they are today. The boy’s family looks for a girl for their son to marry who will be able to take care of him. She should be able to cook well, clean well, and come from a respected family. The girl’s parents mainly just look for someone who will be able to provide for their daughter. In most arranged marriages, the parents choose the spouse of their child. Ba told me she hadn’t even seen her husband until the day of the wedding when they dropped the cloth that separated them. This is a sacred part of a Hindu wedding ceremony and is called *muhurtham*. The cloth separating the bride and groom is removed and they see each other for the first time that day (in modern times) or for the first time in their lives such as in my grandparent’s situation. She had to trust that her parents to choose someone who was well-suited for her. At the time of their *lagan*<sup>69</sup>, by grandma was sixteen and my grandpa was twenty-four. She said marriage and going to live with her husband and in-laws was a major obstacle in her life. Daughter-in-laws were not treated with the respect they should have been treated with, but instead treated almost as the help.



My grandparents started a new chapter in their lives when they decided to start a family. They have five kids—four girls and one boy. There is Ranjan *masi*<sup>70</sup> who is the oldest, then my mom, Daksha *masi*, Mamta *masi*, and the youngest being Sanjay *mama*<sup>71</sup>. My mom and Daksha *masi* are the only two of the family that are here in America. Sanjay *mama*, being the only son, is

<sup>69</sup> Meaning wedding in many Indian languages

<sup>70</sup> Gujarati word for aunt: mother’s sister

<sup>71</sup> Gujarati word for uncle: mother’s brother

the one who takes care of Ba and Dada in India, as well as Mamta *masi* who lost her husband at a young age and never remarried.



My grandparents have visited America twice and stayed with us for quite some time. They do not like it here because they are so used to the hustle and bustle of India and the ability to walk anywhere and everywhere or take a *rickshaw*<sup>72</sup>. Dada speaks English fairly well, probably enough to get by here, but Ba does not speak any. When they would visit, she would spend most of her time cooking her grandkids her famous recipes, while my grandpa would be out and about trying to learn the American ways. Both are strong, selfless, and respected individuals who I cherish dearly. They both want the absolute best for me. I asked Ba what her advice to me would be and she responded with, “Don’t get a boyfriend, don’t marry outside of our culture, study hard, and be humble and always give back,” (Kumbhani). Dada’s advice was, “Don’t sell yourself short. Become a doctor. Show progress, so that your success can be your legacy” (Kumbhani). Last but not least, I wanted to know that when they pass, what they would like their children and grandchildren to remember about them. My grandma’s answer was, “Remember how good of a cook I was, I fed everyone, and I was a woman of God” (Kumbhani). My grandpa said, “I loved everyone and my life is my message to all of you” (Kumbhani).



<sup>72</sup> Taxi-like service in India

## Vietnam War Draft

### Emily Young

Billy Ray Sands was born on June 27, 1947 to James Magnus Sands and Edith Elva Willard Sands in Stuart, Virginia. He grew up on a farm in Lawsonville, North Carolina with both his parents and an older brother named James Leo Sands. Everyone that knew my grandpa called him Ray. He married my grandmother, Jane Sands, on June 28, 1971 in Wentworth, North Carolina. When he turned 18 he was required by law to register for the draft because of the Vietnam War.



It was a normal day on the farm when Ray got a letter stating that he was being drafted into the Army. He had just finished his high school career where he enjoyed playing football, basketball, and baseball. In high school he was the pitcher on the baseball team, and even had scouts looking at him to play on their team. That all came to an end due to him breaking his collar bone in a very bad car accident. From 1965 through 1975, all men were required to when they turned 18 to register with the local draft boards (Bitler, Marianne, and Schmidt). Then in 1966 he was drafted in the Army (Young). A couple months after he was drafted, he had to report to Fort Dix, New Jersey, after he reported to the bus station in Winston-Salem.

It was a cold morning waiting for the bus with only the clothes he had on and his ID. James and Edith were saying their goodbyes when the bus arrived at the station. The bus was heading to Fort Dix, New Jersey where basic training would begin (Ford). All the other people waiting for the bus were young men about the same age, who were also drafted. He boarded the bus and found a seat near a window to wave goodbye to his parents. He knew life was about to change, but did not know how badly. He watched his parents cry and wave as the bus took off.

The drive took about seven hours and thirty minutes to get to Fort Dix, New Jersey. Nobody knew exactly what was about to happen. When they arrived, there were people

everywhere holding guns and dressed in camo. All the sudden a drill instructor got on the bus yelling to the top of his lungs. Ray thought to himself while he started off the bus, "Why should I have to do something like this?" While checking in on base, he received the uniform that would replace the clothes that he had on. He also had to receive shots, and if need be have his teeth fixed. The training would start at 5 A.M. and would not be over until 10 P.M. that night, and this routine was Monday through Saturday. He would have Sundays off when he would have to clean the barracks and his gear (Ford).

There were two purposes to basic training: weapons training, and psychological training. Ray had to go through weapon training which included using an M-1 Garand rifle. For most country boys, using a weapon was not a problem, but it was the other boys that had never touched a gun that had problems. Within the psychological training Ray learned how to become a U.S. soldier. The psychological training could have been the most difficult because the drill instructors were training soldiers to kill people. Basic training lasted for eight weeks. Then he had another eight weeks of technical training to finish before he would be stationed at Camp Casey. During technical training was when he learned more of what his job was going to be, and more combat training (Ford). He learned how to climb phone poles and fix the lines, so his job title was classified as a lineman, which was not an easy job. He was taught how to set-up, and maintain power plants (Fischbach).

He was allowed to return home on leave for about 10 or 15 days because he was sick with pneumonia. This is when his whole experience changed with the Army. Since he became sick his platoon that he started out with continued to move forward. So once he returned to technical training he was placed into a different platoon. Once he finished his eight weeks of technical training he was stationed in Camp Casey in South Korea (Young). This is where he put his job, a lineman, to work. Ray, along with other soldiers, set-up and maintained power plants. During his down time he enjoyed playing cards with the other men. Ray also became friends with a Korean man and nicknamed him "Sandman". He finished his two years in 1968 and returned home to Lawsonville, North Carolina (Young).

It was not until after he was out of the Army that he found out what happened to the first platoon he was with during technical training. That platoon was in actual combat fighting in Vietnam, but because he had gotten sick he was placed into a different platoon. This was a big deal in his life because if he would have gone with that platoon, there would have been a possibility that he would not have returned home. Even though having pneumonia was not pleasant, it possibly saved his life. Once Ray was out of the Army and back home he would often have flashbacks to basic training. Once Jane, his wife, found him on the floor yelling, "Get them off of me, get them off of me," but there was not anything she could do to help. Other than a few flashbacks, life was pretty normal for him.

Right after my grandfather returned home from the war, he went to work for RJ Reynolds in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. He found out really fast that working there wasn't for him, so

he went to work at a plant in Madison, North Carolina. This was where he met his wife, Jane Sands. They got married on June 28, 1971. After that they both quit their jobs and started farming in tobacco full time. It was a slow start, but over a couple of years they had increased the size of their crop to 95 acres of tobacco. In the winter time Ray would log to keep money coming in, since Jane didn't have a job. Together they had two children: a daughter and a son, whose names are Billie and Jimmy Sands. They worked right alongside their parents until they got married, and had children of their own. Once Ray passed away on November 6, 2002 his son, Jimmy, took over the farm and continued farming just like his father (Young).

## The Journey of a Lifetime

### Hollie Lyons

The following narrative essay is based on the events that surrounded the life of my paternal grandfather, Russell P. Lyons during the years of 1952-1954. My paternal grandfather was born on May 4<sup>th</sup>, 1940 to John Michael Lyons and Lillian Kinney Lyons in St. Louis, Missouri. John Michael Lyons was a member of the United States Army and was stationed overseas while Lillian Kinney Lyons was a homemaker. The information discussed is a product of an interview that I had with my grandfather and cultural research.

My grandfather describes his childhood as "simply simple." The Missouri native lived in downtown St. Louis with his mother and two brothers in a small three-bedroom home. His mother, Lillian was a homemaker who took care of the family and handled all of the household duties. His early life was as close to normal as it could be for the time period. He went to school, played baseball, and got along well with his brothers. The only thing that wasn't normal for the time was not having his father directly involved in his life. John Michael Lyons left the family for the service shortly after my grandfather was born and didn't come back until he was nearly 10. This small reunion was a bitter reminder of how little my grandfather knew his father and how little his father matched his expectations.

My grandfather didn't get an opportunity to see his father again until the spring of 1952. When he was 12 years old, a letter was delivered to his home bearing the news. His mother had been exchanging letters with his father for some time, and it seemed that they were reconnecting. John was now stationed just north of Frankfurt, Germany in the small town of Freedburg and desperately missed his family. In these letters, John and Lillian discussed the events of their separate lives, and John hinted at the possibility of a visit, but he really wanted so much more. He wanted to move his family to where he was stationed and through these letters, the decision was made that the family would travel overseas to be with him. John sent for his family, filed all the necessary paperwork, and the United States Army was to pay for their airfare.

Russell, along with his mother and his younger brother, Michael, traveled by train from St. Louis, MO to New York, NY. The train arrived at Grand Central Station, and from there they took a two-hour bus ride to Fort Dix, known today as Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst. This former military base is located outside of Trenton, New Jersey. When Russell and his family arrived, they were assigned a male sponsor who would show them where their transfer barracks were and tell them what time dinner was. The transfer barracks were considered similar to a modern-day hotel because of the numerous doors that were spread out evenly on both sides of a long hallway. Each family was assigned a room based on the number of family members, with each room having appropriate bunking space and an adjacent bathroom. The following morning,

the family was loaded up onto a shuttle bus with other families making the same trek and taken to LaGuardia Airport in New York, New York.

This trip was taken during what was known as the "golden age" of aviation, an era in which the popularity of airlines and the experience of flying were at its peak. According to McCartney (2010), the glory days of flying came with "plenty of legroom, nary a security hassle and plane loads of excitement when people could buy a ticket to defy gravity and arrive in new cities in hours instead of days." A flight on a plane such as 4-engine turbo prop TWA was not considered as lavish of an experience as a civilian flight, but the two were very similar. A stewardess served meals to passengers and dispatched blankets and drinks just like any other flight. The only true difference was the manifest. The passengers on this flight were only members of the military and their families. There were not certain social norms that had to be met like they had to be on a traditional flight like dressing up. Instead of dressing in his Sunday best to fly, Russell wore a simple dress shirt and his favorite pair of Levi's. The airplane made a simple landing in Shannon, Ireland to refuel and continued on into Europe. The plane landed in Frankfurt and the family was picked up by John. He transported the family to Bad Nauheim and took a leave from the service for 30 days to help his family adjust to the countryside.

My grandfather spent the next two years living in Bad Nauheim, and his life returned to normal. He attended a school set up especially for the children of the men serving in the military, played on the school's baseball team just like he did in the United States, and built a strong relationship with his youngest brother. His mother still took care of the household, and his father was home more often. My grandfather was truly happy here, but as life goes in the military, change was always on the horizon. His father was reassigned to Fort Sill in Lawton, Oklahoma, and he was to take his family with him. My grandfather was not sad about leaving his new home; he was excited. He was enthralled with the idea of leaving for a new place and all the prospects that came with it.

## A Passion for the Coal Mines

### Vanessa Ibarra

Eldon Adkins is chosen family rather than blood relation. Eldon was born July 15, 1951 in Morganfield, Kentucky. His parents' names were Elmer and Opal Adkins. He grew up in a home with three other siblings. He had two children. He had a love for the coal mines and at the age of twenty-two he began his journey as a coal mine worker. The information given comes mainly from a personal face-to-face interview with Eldon Adkins (sixty-four years old) himself. Eldon stopped working at the coal mines at the age of thirty-one (nine years of coal mine labor). After working in the mines he served during the Vietnam War but wasn't stationed in Vietnam.

At the age of twenty-two Eldon Adkins began his journey working in the many coal mines that surrounded West Virginia. Eldon worked for many coal companies such as Pittston Coal Company, Eastern Associated Coal, and Maben Energy Corporation. He enjoyed working at each of the companies and strived to be the best employee possible at each one.

Eldon describes the working conditions in the mines as a terrible kind of filthy. Many of the bigger coal corporations provided bathhouses, so that miners could shower after their shifts. As far as temperature, it was 68 degrees year-round underground. As warm as that temperature may seem, it is actually a cold temperature for miners because the presence of "fresh air" was gone. Although, after experiencing underground for a while, miners enjoyed the temperature. Conditions for the workplace depended on ones surroundings. The surroundings were based on the rising of the water. If the water is too high then one has trouble mining the amount of coal needed for the day. However, a good condition is when the water is barely present so that it is easier to mine coal.

The main goal for mining in West Virginia was extracting the coal for the company. Back then, all of this work was done purely by the hands of union workers. However, it is now reliant on machinery. The uniforms were coveralls, insulated underwear, hard-toe boots, hard hat, and miners light. Many workers could get away with leather or rubber boots if they did not own any hard-toe boots. Each worker had a cap light which was also known as a miners light. This light was to be charged every night. However, the battery would actually last two full shifts.

Just like most people, miners had a shift. The shifts are called portal to portal<sup>73</sup>. Each portal to portal was eight hours. If one wanted to, he or she could work two portal to portals in one day, which is two eight hour shifts. This would be similar to what we refer to as "overtime"; although, the difference is that one can't just pull a shift of two or three extra hours. Either he or she worked just one eight hour shift and then went home, or they worked an eight hour shift and then worked another eight hour shift. There was no in-between. The longest time Eldon stayed underground was for four back to back eight hour shifts. A positive to working this "double

<sup>73</sup> Portal to portal means the shift starts when you entered the mine, all the way down, and then when you exited through the entry point.

back” shift was that the company had to furnish the employees with a lunch<sup>74</sup>. Anything worked over the eight hour shift was automatic time and a half. If one worked on Saturdays it was time and a half. If one was to work on a Sunday it was double time. Also, if someone were to work on their birthday it would count as double time. The pay for a coal miner was better than most jobs around, when calculated the pay was eight times greater than minimum wage.

There were all sorts of rankings one could have as a coal miner. The rankings included union and non-union workers,<sup>75</sup> section boss, construction boss, mine former, and superintendent. The union workers had different classifications that consisted of a low paygrade, a middle paygrade, and a high paygrade. The section bosses were charge of working those men to extract the coal. Construction bosses were in charge of getting the track and belt laid up, all of the water pumped out of the mines, and the timbers set. The Mine Forman was in charge of all bosses underground. Lastly, the superintendent was in charge of everyone else in that particular mine. Eldon Adkins worked his way all the way up to the superintendent. Which meant he was paid based upon salary rather than by the hour. He didn't get any money for working on the weekend or extra (time and a half or double time) benefits.

Mr. Adkins' responsibilities as a superintendent varied for each of the workers and bosses and for himself. For the company he had to make sure all coal was extracted that the company desired. His responsibility for the union workers was to ensure that they were fairly treated as union personnel and that the contract was respected. It was important that he, as the superintendent, made sure that agreements were heard and taken care of for the union workers. The contract for the union included that the workers had plenty of food and the necessary ventilation. He knew there was disagreements between the union and non-union workers so he did his best to keep the peace. He was held responsible for the creation of a safe atmosphere between both the union and the non-union workers.

As a superintendent, he had a lot of paper work to complete. He arrived an hour early every day to go over the paperwork that the previous shift left, and then signed his name showing that he looked over it. After the shift underground he had to do the a similar report, then fill out the company reports about how much coal has been mined and extracted, lastly he had to complete the workers' time sheets. Most of the time he stayed about three hours past when everyone else was gone.

According to Mr. Adkins, it took a lot of work to become a boss. A worker couldn't just say, "I want to be a boss" without showing his or her hard work to obtain that position. They would have to do tasks such as passing a state test made up of seven sections. On each of these sections a person has to score as much as 85%, and be recognized by the state. Once this is

<sup>74</sup> This lunch included two sandwiches, a fruit or a vegetable, and a soda or a milk. This was in the 1969 Federal Health and Safety Act.

<sup>75</sup> To be a union worker meant that you were classified as organized labor. There were mandatory union meetings. Union workers had a contract and the employers had to abide by and respect that contract. The non-union workers solely worked for the company period and there was no set pay for each worker because they didn't have a contract to abide by.

achieved he or she will be given a card that says that they have completed and passed those classes. In the early 80's, to be hired as a coal miner, one had to complete an 80 hour class. This means you had to go to school to learn the safety hazards, laws and conditions for 80 hours. Once one obtained these credentials, it is possible one will get hired and then will be considered as a red hat<sup>76</sup>. After a miner's certificate is earned, then one can advance to a black hat<sup>77</sup>.

Eldon Adkins witnessed and was a part of many near-death experiences during his time spent in the coal mines. One of his first scary experiences was when a piece of metal fell fourteen feet and hit him in the head. He was on site getting ready to begin his shift. He had not yet entered the mine and was around quite a bit of machinery that was there due to construction in the area. Him and a few of his co-workers were circling the property waiting for the shift to begin when they heard a very loud cracking sound. They all looked up and nothing happened. Instead of moving out of the way, they all talked about the sound and that is when the metal fell and hit Eldon in the head and one of his co-workers in the shoulder. This incident put Eldon in the hospital for three days because the doctors were afraid he would become paralyzed from the neck down. Another time<sup>78</sup>, the roof caved in twenty feet wide and 140 foot long. It fell out sixty feet high. There was too much weight on top of the roof and it had just began pouring rain. Luckily, it was lunch break for everyone. Twenty feet away, there were 210 people who watched the roof cave into the mine. Thankfully, no one was present in that section. The next near-tragic event<sup>79</sup> was when a lady in his group saw a rock drop from the top of the mine. She stopped abruptly and he then asked her "why are you stopping?" and she told him about the rock. Since they were the first ones in the mine that day, he instructed her that they just sit there for a minute and wait. They waited for just a few seconds and the whole mine in front of them caved in. If she had gone forward, ignoring the piece of falling rock, every single one of them would have died.

When Eldon first got his job at the coal mines it was a very popular place to work because it paid well and because it was local. However, for Eldon it wasn't about the money. He did it purely because he loved the work. He loved being underground, and had a passion for being the engineer he had to be as a miner. As said before, he worked his way up to becoming a superintendent. He got his engineering degree. This degree made him feel like he had accomplished something. Mr. Adkins stated, "Coal mining can take you other places than just coal mining. By having the engineering degree one had endless opportunities to qualify for all sorts of jobs rather than just plain coal mining. Not that there's anything wrong with that, but it's great to have other options. There's so many different ways someone, could use that education."

<sup>76</sup> Red hat means that one is a trainee and that they are not to be left alone. They have to be with someone at all times serving as a shadow. This continues for six months. After the six months of training is complete they have to take a test for a miner's certificate.

<sup>77</sup> A black hat means that the person has the freedom to work alone and possibly advance in positions.

<sup>78</sup> Eldon Adkins was a Superintendent when this event happened.

<sup>79</sup> Eldon Adkins was a Superintendent when this event happened.

## One Story, Among Millions

### Cinthia Flores

Esteban Sanchez (December 26 1956- )

Esteban was born in a small ranch named "La Alberca" in San Luis Potosi, Mexico where he grew up with 6 brothers and 5 sisters. He had to drop out of school at the age of 6 to help his father out on the field so he never did learn to read or write. He met his wife Valentina at a neighboring ranch at the age of seventeen. She was only sixteen years old when she gave birth to her first child, Maria, my mother. Esteban and Valentina had 3 boys and 2 girls. All of the information found in this story comes from a phone interview with my grandfather, Esteban Sanchez.

Esteban and his family lived in a small mud house with two bedrooms and a small kitchen that had no running water. Esteban worked as a farmer taking care of the fields and livestock. Times were hard, especially with three small children one of which suffered from a growth disorder. Due to his disorder, Carlos needed a lot of medication and extra care. Esteban did not make enough money to cover the cost of the medications and needs that Carlos required. He barely made enough to put food on the table for his family. So when he heard word going around town that people were going to "el norte"<sup>80</sup> and were making lots of money, he knew that was the answer to his financial problems. He took what little money he had saved up and borrowed some from his father to pay for "El coyote"<sup>81</sup>, a person who helped immigrants from Mexico get to the United States.

On the morning of October 5, 1979, Esteban set out on his journey to the United States leaving behind his family. Maria, his oldest daughter, was six years old, Carlos was five years old, Gerardo was only three years old and his wife Valentina was two months pregnant with their fourth child. After saying farewell to his family, he set off for what he remembers as being one of the most frightening and harrowing experiences of his life.

From the beginning, Esteban knew it would be a difficult journey, but he could have never imagined how terrifying it would actually turn out to be. He traveled along with five other men and two "coyotes". The coyotes had crossed the border many times, so they knew where they could and could not go, and they promised to help them cross safely. They had to walk for miles and miles through woods and deserts because that was the safest way to avoid the border police. They walked a lot at night, using only the light the stars provided as a guide. They would sleep behind bushes and trees at night, so they wouldn't be seen. Esteban recalls coming across many snakes throughout his journey. The most common being rattlesnakes. He remembers the "coyote" would tell them to check their shoes and bags before putting them on because often time scorpions would seek shelter in these places. He knew a bite from either a scorpion or

<sup>80</sup> Used commonly in Mexico to refer to the United States

<sup>81</sup> A guide who helps immigrants cross the border.

rattlesnake could be deadly in their situation. They had very little food to eat, but hunger didn't really cross his mind. All he could think about was making it across the border safely. Throughout his entire journey and the difficulties, Esteban had only one thing on his mind, his family. The thought of being able to provide a better life for his family kept him going.

After several days and nights of walking they had reached their destination, "El Rio Grande"<sup>82</sup>, the river that would take them to American soil. They waited until after the sun had set to cross the river, that way it would be less likely for them to be seen by the border police. They crossed "El Rio Grande" using an inflatable raft that "El Coyote" had. The river was deep and the current was powerful. He couldn't help but think of all the stories he had heard back home about how many people never made it out of the river, but there was no going back. He prayed that nothing hit the raft because he knew if it broke, they would more than likely drown. After rowing for what he felt was an eternity, they made it across the river safely. Esteban let out a sigh of relieve. He had made it! He was on the land of opportunity, the United States of America. They walked for 20 more minutes after crossing to where a van was ready to pick them up and take them to where they would be staying.

Esteban ended up in San Antonio, Texas where he worked on a farm and then in a tobacco field. He made more money working one job in the US than he did when he worked several jobs in Mexico. The majority of his income was sent back home to Mexico to his wife and children. He stayed in San Antonio for ten months before heading back home, just in time for the birth of his daughter, Elizabeth. With his earnings that he made from working in San Antonio he was able to buy a small house in the city so his children could get a better education.

When asked if he would do go it again, Esteban said he would do it all over again to be able to provide for his family and he did, Esteban returned to the United States fifteen years later, after his oldest son, Carlos, passed away after years of battling a growth disorder. This time he stayed in the small town of Mount Airy, North Carolina where he worked in a clothing factory and in tobacco fields for a year and then returned back home to San Luis Potosi, Mexico. He now has a visa that allows him to legally enter the US, and he visits a couple of times a year.

My grandfather's story about his journey to the United States is only one among millions. Every year millions of immigrants cross the border trying to escape from violence and poverty in search of a better life for themselves and their loved ones. They put their lives at risk and overcome many difficulties and obstacles to be able to pursue the American dream.

<sup>82</sup> A river that forms the US-Mexico frontier

## A Brave Woman

### Norma Leonides

My mom, Tomasa Leonides, was born December 24 1966 in Los Limones, Michoacán. When she was just eight months old, her parents moved back to where they were originally from, San Pedro y Las Garzas, Guerrero. She lived there for the first fourteen years of her life, because when she married my father she moved to Ajuchitlán with my dad's family. She then had to move to Mexico City a few months later. She lived in Mexico City from 1981-1988. My father decided to move back to Ajuchitlán taking my mom with him, they lived there for two years. Then, in 1991 they immigrated to California in search of a better life. In October of 1996, she and my father made their journey to North Carolina where they have finally decided to stay.

In the hot steaming weather, my mother walked barefoot from the river carrying a bucket of washed clothes on her head and a bucket of water in each hand. Life in San Pedro y Las Garzas was not easy during the time that my mom lived there. They didn't have any faucets that ran clean water or washing machines where clothes wash at the press of a button. During that time it was work, work, work from sun up till sun down. Especially for the people that were really poor. No one had cars or machines to get the work done faster. My mom recalls having only three dresses and no shoes. It took a while to get into *el pueblo* to buy new things, and most of the time people didn't have time to waste. My grandfather, Juan Pineda, had to go out and grow crops, and my grandmother, Maria Isabel Pineda, was busy taking care of her newborns. As the eldest daughter, my mom was the one that had to gather wood and make the fire. She then had to run and grind corn in the mill grinder, so she could make them into tortillas. She also had to be on the lookout for her younger siblings while her mother was nursing the babies. My mom says that ever since she could remember, she had been doing heavy chores to help around the house. She wanted to go to school, but her father didn't let her because he said that education wouldn't help her in the future, and it cost too much, so she had to stay home and help her mother. Education wasn't required during the time that she lived in San Pedro y Las Garzas, which was from 1967-1981. No one said anything if a child wasn't sent to school. Girls had to grow up knowing how to do chores, so they could get married and take care of their husbands and future children.

My mom met my dad one day when she was washing clothes down by the river. They met through her cousin, Eusebio, who introduced them. Shortly after, they got married and they ran away where my dad's parents lived which was in Ajuchitlán del Progreso. There she was well received by her in laws, Ricardo Leonides and Fortunata Leonides, because she was very helpful and kind. She was used to all the cooking and the cleaning; it all came naturally to her. They could only live there for a few months, because word spread that my mom's dad wanted to kill my dad and he was furiously looking for them. This is when they decided to move to Mexico City where one of my aunts was living. There, my parents had my three older brothers, Eden, Miguel Angel, and Juan Antonio Leonides. My dad had to work for long periods of time leaving my mother with his sister alone. It was tough to live in Mexico City. My mom says that the only

way she survived is because "... *la misericordia de Dios es muy grande.*" Gods' grace is grand. She was illiterate, but she found ways to take her children, when sick, to the doctor by herself when my aunt was working. Mexico City is one of the most populated cities in the world. It is really easy for people to get lost in the immense crowds, especially if they come from the countryside and are illiterate like my mother was. There was one time that she had to go get medicine for my older brother, Eden, at the Zócalo which was quite a distance from where she lived. The Zócalo is the main square in Mexico City, and she says that she recalls people saying that it was the place where the Aztecs held ceremonies. She had no idea what this meant at the time, and she didn't really care either because she was busy trying to get there to get my brothers' medicine. She had to take buses in order to get there. She remembers how especially packed the buses were on that day. Some people pushed and shoved, and they were really rude to her. At one point she wasn't sure if she was going in the right direction, so she got off the bus and asked a lady for directions. The lady started telling her that she had to walk twenty minutes up the road, so she could catch the next bus. After catching the bus, she had to read the road signs to know where she had to stop next, so she could catch another bus that went straight to the Zócalo. She thanked the lady for the somewhat helpful advice she gave her, and she went on her way up the road. She got on the bus and since she couldn't read, she went with her instinct and gut and got off where she thought it was time to get off. Sure enough, it was the right stop, and she got to the Zócalo safely. "*Fue un milagro.*" It was a miracle.

When my third oldest brother, Juan, was two years old my mom got news from her cousin that my grandfather's anger had cooled down. She and my father decided to go visit my dad's parents and invite my mom's parents over. My mom was very nervous, and she was very excited at the same time to see her parents once again, so they could meet their grandchildren. The anticipated moment had arrived, and she met once again with her parents. It went extremely well and my grandfather was eager to meet his three grandsons. She says that she felt relieved that he didn't turn his back on them. A year later she had my sister, Rocio Leonides. While my mom's relationship with her parents was thriving, work for my dad wasn't. My dad had bigger dreams of going to a land where he had more opportunities to succeed. In 1991, they finally decided to immigrate to Santa Ana, California where two of my dad's brothers had decent jobs. My mother says that it was even harder for her to live in California, because she had no relatives there, only her two brother-in-law's. My mom and dad, along with my four siblings, had to live with two other families, so they could afford the rent. The women that lived with her didn't like her much, because she says that they thought she was weird. My mom has always been the kind of person that minds her own business and doesn't gossip about people. In order to help my dad out with money, she would pick up cans in the killer heat even when she was pregnant with my brother Daniel. She wasn't afraid to do it all even while she was carrying around that big belly. There were times where she had no ride to go to her appointments, so she had to walk. As time



passed, my father gathered enough money to buy a van. This was a big step up for them. She remembers how happy she felt that her children would no longer had to walk to go somewhere.

In 1996, some of my dad's friends persuaded him to move to North Carolina where there was an abundant amount of tobacco work. They moved while she was eight months pregnant with me. We arrived in Dobson, North Carolina, and we lived there for eighteen years, and we recently moved to Mount Airy, North Carolina in May, 2014. Three years after my mom had me, she had my youngest brother, Freddy. It has been a long journey. Now she is able to write and read, and she understands a little bit of English. Her years have made her wise and she always says, "God knows what he's doing. His timing is perfect and even though I went through hard times, I know that he always took care of me even when I felt like I had no one."

## Life without a Mother

Jessica Hernandez

Elisa Ocampo Hernandez (June 30, 1969-) married to Domingo Hernandez (March 18, 1968-)

Elisa Ocampo Hernandez was born in Teloapan, Guerrero on June 30, 1969. The names of her parents are Agustin Ocampo and Patricia Rogel Ocampo. She has seven brothers and sisters, but with her there are eight of them in total. Her family is big, but they lost an important member on February 13, 1975 and that person was her mother. Elisa was only six at the time and a few years later her father remarried twice after her mother passed away. Both of these women weren't mother materials to her siblings and her. She had a really tough time while growing up, but her life got better when she left the house and got married. The man that she married was Domingo Hernandez on January 20. These two people are my parents and Agustin Ocampo and Patricia Rogel Ocampo are my grandparents. What this document contains comes from my mother, Elisa Ocampo Hernandez, and this is her story on how she felt and what she endured while growing up.

Why is my family being punished? Why was my mother taken away from me? Why did God let this happen? There are too many questions swirling in my head, and I would like to know the answers to these questions. I believe if my mother were alive, then my life would be better. My siblings and I wouldn't feel like there is a piece of our hearts missing, and our father would be more involved in our lives. Also, my mother would be showing us her love every day and be there for us. I remember that every time we went to town to get groceries, she would always buy us ice cream and buy each of us something like a toy, shoes or clothes. Then when we would get back from school, she would always give each of us a hug and ask us how our day was. There was this one time when my sisters and I were helping her cook dinner, and instead of cooking we ended up having a food fight. We went out that night to eat and that was one of the best days of my life. This woman was my best friend and an amazing mother. Without her, my siblings and I went through a very tough time.

A few years after my mother passed, my father decided to remarry. I guess he felt like we needed a mother-figure in our lives, but no one could replace my mother. The woman he ended up getting married to seemed nice. However, she was just a two-faced. Whenever my father wasn't around, she was the Wicked Witch of the West. She did many horrible things to my siblings and me, but we made it through it together. She would hit us, but mostly me and my three younger siblings. I guess she would hit us the most because we younger and she was stronger than us. There were times when one of us ended up bleeding, and we couldn't tell my father because she had him so hooked. He just believed every single one of her lies, and I just wanted to smack some sense into him, but I didn't because he is still my father. I will always respect and love him no matter what.

Besides feeding lies to my father she also wouldn't cook for any of my siblings and me. She would only cook for my father and herself. We had no choice but to learn how to cook. We

would ask one of my mother's good friends to teach us how, and from there on out we started to cook for ourselves. However, the worst part was that my father's wife never let us use the ingredients that were already at the house. She practically had everything locked, so we couldn't use them. We had no money to buy groceries because she made sure we didn't get any money. We had no choice but to look for jobs. It was getting to be too much for us since we still went to school, cleaned the house and cooked. Plus we were just kids who were trying to survive. In the end, all of us decided to quit in middle school, and that was hard for me because I liked going to school. However, with the little money we made it wasn't enough to buy school supplies. There was just no point in staying in school.

Our lives just kept getting worse and worse with this lady living with us. However, that changed when I turned twelve. My father ended up getting a divorce with the woman and that was the best birthday gift anyone ever gave me that day. We no longer had to deal with her and her mistreatment, but then a year later my father decided to remarry again. I thought the first stepmother was evil, but this one was really worse. She made the other woman look like an angel. This woman wouldn't cook for us or give us money either. She would try to hit us, but we wouldn't let her because now we were older and able to defend ourselves. Whenever my father would get back from work, she would feed him lies on how we mistreated her, while in reality it was she who would mistreat us. My father would believe her, and that would always make me mad, because he should be siding with us not her.

I know I shouldn't hold grudges since all of this is in the past, but I will never forgive this woman when she stole my mother's possessions. When my mother passed away my brothers, sisters and I decided to get everything that belonged to her and put it away in a treasure chest. We hid this treasure chest when my father remarried the first and the second time. The reason we did this is because we were afraid that one of these women would steal everything that had belonged to our mother and take it away from us. The chest had her jewelry, clothes, shoes, and several pictures of her, but our worst fears did come true. Our second stepmother found our chest and took everything that we had left of our mother. We never saw any of those items ever again. However, we did find out that she sold the jewelry, clothes, and shoes. The pictures that we had of our mother were all burned. Everything that we had left of her, besides the memories of her, were gone, and we couldn't do anything about it. This chest contained the only connection that we had left with our mother, but now it's all gone. My father ended up staying with this woman, and they are even together to this day.

There were times when I would blame my father for everything that happened when I was younger. If he never had remarried, my siblings and I wouldn't have been mistreated. My mother's stuff would still be with us. We would have never started working at a young age, and we could have also finished school. Yes, we would still be in pain for the loss of our mother, but we would still be going on in our lives. She would always be on our minds even to this day. She was the light in my family, and we lost a little of that light. If I could see my mother face-to-face

right now, I would tell her how much I love and miss her. Tell her everything that has happened to me and show her pictures of her grandchildren. However, this can never happen, but I do know that up in heaven she is watching over every single one of us. One day I will see her again and my family will once again be together.

**A Battle in Me**  
**Esperanza**  
**Vanessa Sanabria**

This narrative is meant to focus on and emphasize the impact of a mental illness on the self as well as others around the individual. Due to the privacy of the individual, we will hide the identity and simply refer to the character as Esperanza. This narrative will be like a diary entry and is a true life experience of dealing with depression and anxiety and trying to overcome them as told through the lens of Esperanza. Note to the reader: this narrative is simply to document a lineage of depression that has prolonged in a family for three to four generations now and used for a possible explanation of the biology behind depression and that it can be genetically inherited.

Another day, here I go. Aren't I supposed to be getting better? At least that's what my family and friends keep telling me. I feel so shaky, why am I not dead yet? The night before was such a drag. I wish I could remember it, but the usual use of drugs distorts it all. Hmm, long sleeves today? If I don't, people might ask about it and I don't want to go through the explanation once again. Okay, Esperanza, time to face another day. Get up, force yourself; come on! Brush your hair, brush your teeth, and don't forget to wash off the runny mascara from last night. You're going to be late for school. Do I really need to go to school? Don't be stupid, of course you do, if not there's going to be another argument, it'll be your fault- like everything else, right? Why am I crying? Stupid, so stupid, you have nothing to cry over, stop! Okay Esperanza, stop feeling like this, come on.

That's about how every day starts, feeling desperate to just feel okay. My usual morning pep talk, you could say. I struggle at finding a small glimmer of hope somewhere throughout the day that makes me feel something, absolutely anything, but this. What is "this" you may ask? "This" is the feeling of wanting to end everything but wanting to start over and be better, because somewhere deep in the realms of the darkness that has taken over inside, there is still a little part of you that thinks things can get better. "This" is having no motivation to want to do anything at all but having the excessive worry about failing because then everyone would be right, and I don't want to prove them right. "This" is wondering where I went wrong and what I could have done differently, but finding no answers, only to be left feeling empty and frustrated with myself and the world. "This" is wanting people around to talk to and try to be happy, but being so afraid of socializing and meeting new people. "This" is watching my friends excel, and me staying in the same spot. "This" is being terrified to begin to feel happy because I've become accustomed to things going bad. "This" is feeling trapped inside my own mind and knowing that the only way to end it is by killing her, the one that's taken over... But how do I kill her, without killing myself?

Today's a rainy day. I like the rain, it's soothing. Water droplets hit my face as I walk from class to class and make my senses come alive. Thunder and lightning crackle off in the distance, and I see the light in the darkened sky. Rain falls to earth, almost like angels do. People

used to say that when it rained, it meant God was sad with us and hurt, and that he was crying. He must be in some real pain today because it's pouring down hard. Gosh, it's so beautiful. I've been losing my faith; I wonder why he isn't listening to my plea. I've prayed long hours, I've asked "why me" countless times and I feel like I've been left alone. I guess it's the fear, you know? They say if you kill yourself, God won't let you into his reign of Heaven, you'll go straight to hell. It's like I'm living through hell anyways with all of this, what difference will it make? I should just kill myself.

"Class, don't forget you have three papers due tomorrow, eight chapters to read by tomorrow, and remember to study for your test tomorrow, it's 40% of your grade. Enjoy your evening everyone!" School is dragging me through the mud over and over. It's not legitimately that bad, but that's literally what it feels like most of the time. I don't feel like doing anything anymore, I'm so tired of the same routine every single day. School shoots my anxiety through the roof. I panic and can't think on my assignment, and then comes the depression state; I get sad and break down because I can't bring myself to pick up the pencil and complete my work. I give up on it. I used to be smart, I probably still am. I don't know. I'm not trying anymore, I just can't bring myself to do any of this anymore. Every day is a struggle and I want it to end.

I'm home alone now. It would be the perfect time to- Oh no! What's happening? My chest hurts, I can't breathe, I'm shaking, my thoughts are running out of control; I can't keep up, this is terrifying. I'm down, my body won't respond to my thoughts. I can't see- my vision is blurred and I can't stop shaking. I lay there trying to catch air into my lungs, I can't stop panicking. I feel as if there is a fist squeezing my heart, a hand strangling my throat, tears stream down my face. This is a panic attack, I realize. I know I won't die, but in that moment it sure feels like I will. This fear is irrational; my entire body feels heavy and drained. The scariest part is that panic attacks don't last longer than about ten minutes when they reach their peak, and yet I feel like I'm in a never-ending time lapse. Crap. My stomach starts to twist, I know what's coming next. Chunks. That's when I know it's over. My body slowly resumes to trying function properly once more. I hate this.

It's nearing the end of the day, the sun is setting and I've survived another day of this. My family has gotten home, but I isolate myself in my room to avoid the argument I know will be bound to happen. All my pills are already there, prepared to be taken to treat this. I hate having to have to feel like my life is depending on medication, like I can't be happy on my own. My mixing of alcohol with the anti-depressants definitely isn't doing me good. I don't know what I'm doing with my life. I don't know where I went wrong. I don't know if I will ever be better, it's been over seven years. I don't know if I'll ever finish my education. I don't know if I can do this on my own. I don't know myself anymore. I find myself saying "I don't know" too many things in my life because I don't know what life has in store for me at this point and I don't know what to do anymore; live or kill myself? Only time will tell.

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