

Last fall, I was looking through one of the last Bibles that Big Mama (Cornelia) had used after her house burned in 1997. You can imagine my surprise when I found the following letter which she wrote to her family in 1998—and my greater surprise and delight when I discovered that she had written primarily about her father. Following is a transcript of her letter:

*To My Dear Family,*

*I decided I would write a few things I can remember from my childhood days after 92 years. I will start with how I went everywhere with my daddy.*

*Everybody raised wheat then to have flour for bread. He cut it when it was ripe with a cradle—no machinery then to cut. Somebody would have to thrash it, then it was carried to the mill, the one across from where Rachel lived. I went to the mill every time my daddy went. The graham flour was so good. We were crazy about the biscuits. When Ma rang the dinner bell for Papa, we went to the field to ride Tony to the house. Papa carried his cotton to the gin on a one-horse wagon with a frame on it. When that was filled it was a bale. He went to Mr. Walker Allen's gin and some to Horace Adams. That was the only time we had cheese.*

*When he had a bale of cotton ginned, people sold the seed to pay for the gin. What money he got out of the seed, he would buy some cheese and a few other things to eat. What we had to eat was raised at home. We had all kinds of fruit trees and strawberries. When Christmas came we were so proud of an apple and orange, bunch of raisins and a bag of candy and one toy. We walked 3 miles to school every day. When it was real cold I would have on my long johns and black stockings over them. They sure felt good. When it was raining, Papa would come for us in the buggy. My first grade teacher's name was Miss Nannie Bell Jinks from Jackson. I loved her very much. I was 8 years old when Mama and Papa moved their membership to Prospect. Until then, we went to Concord Methodist Church over near Newborn. We went in the buggy to revival every night for a week. Leon and me would lay in the foot of the buggy and sleep all the way home.*

*All these things are precious memories to me. Now my family is a great joy to me in my old age. I hope they will remember something they will love to think of about home.*

*Love,*

*Mama*