

**Commemorating the Life of
Lala Grace (Edwards) Yancy
[1906-2010]**

**Compiled by
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and
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LALA GRACE EDWARDS YANCY

THE YEARS 1906 - 1926

Lala was born November 17, 1906, to John Fletcher and Emma Yancy in Calhoun County, Mississippi. She was the fifth of six daughters born to the couple. The oldest daughter, Elsie, had been born in 1897. She was nine years older than Lala. Her second sister, Myrtle, born in 1898, was eight years older than Lala. The third daughter, Etta Gertrude, born in 1900, died before her first birthday. Icie, born in 1902, was four when Lala was born. When Lala was almost three, Thula was born in August, 1909.

However, there were three other children fathered by Fletcher and his first wife, Alva Roane Edwards, who died from injuries when her dress caught fire. His oldest child, my grandmother, Carlie Leota Edwards, was fourteen years old when Lala was born. There were two brothers, Elvin (Buck) and Delta, and this completed the family.

In the early 1900s most people in the South were farmers. During these years, cotton was a profitable crop. Lala said one or two bales of cotton, when sold, would provide a living for a year. It might have been a meager living that involved a lot of hard work for every member of the family, but it was a way of life for a majority of people. Of course there were towns like Oxford and Jackson, but with the wagons pulled by mules, which was the usual form of transportation for these farmers, it took a long time to travel to distant towns.

For those families who didn't have the money to buy land, they could become sharecroppers. Fletcher was a sharecropper during these years. He farmed another man's land, and he got part of the profit from the crop. Naturally, most farmers wanted to own their own land, farm it, and get all of the profit. Fletcher was able to save some money and around 1909, he borrowed eight hundred dollars from Mort Hipp to buy land of his own. Fletcher and Emma had recently moved from the Potlocona community to be closer to Sarepta where the girls could walk to the Sarepta School. Mort Hipp was the great uncle of Martha Hipp Dickson. Martha is related to the Bratton family because her grandmother was Martha Bratton. Martha Bratton was the sister of Hugh Bratton, father of our grandfather, Jacob Bratton.

According to Lala, Fletcher made one crop, harvesting in the fall of 1910. His crop was so good that he decided to clear more of his land in order to make even more money. On New Year's Day, 1911, he was working in the rain to clear this land. At that time in Mississippi, all the land had trees growing on it, and the trees had to be cleared in order to plant a crop. He caught a cold which turned into pneumonia, and he died on January 18, 1911. Our grandmother, Carlie, was nineteen years old and expecting her first child in February. Lala was four years old. When I asked Lala about her memories of Papa, she said, "I can remember him carrying in wood for the fire."



EMMA EDWARDS FAMILY

L/R:Lala Grace-Myrtle-Thula-Emma-Icie



BR: Eunice (Freeman) Graham & Son, Charlie--Con Hardy--
 Roxie & Brother (Buck) Edwards--Carlie (Edwards)
 & Jacob Bratton
 NR: Icie (Edwards) Howell--Obell (Edwards) Hardy--
 Emma (Yancy) Edwards--Elsie (Edwards) Freeman--
 NR: Gussie Freeman
 FR: Wayne Freeman--Myrtle Edwards--Dane Freeman--
 Lala (Edwards) & Brenda Yancy--Thula (Edwards)
 Tindall



Newton Yancy



Mary Elizabeth (Sharp) Yancy



Lala(Edwards) & Newt Yancy
Her Grandfather

When Fletcher died, his daddy, Roland Edwards, told Emma, "It's supposed to freeze tonight. We got to get him in the ground." The children rode in the wagon to the funeral. The funeral was held outside in the cold January weather while Emma sat in a chair by her husband's grave.

There are no pictures of Fletcher, but Lala and her sisters said he was small like his daddy and he had dark hair. Lala told me in a letter in 1995, "I think of Clint, (my brother), looking so much like his dad, Clinton, and Clinton made me think of my dad. Clinton's hair fell to one side like Papa's." (I have a picture of Daddy, Clinton, at fourteen, with his hair falling to one side.)

Left with five daughters to raise, Emma was one month from her 32nd birthday. Elsie was thirteen and Thula was seventeen months old. Lala said different members of the family stayed with them to try to keep the land. During this year they didn't have any money, but they had food and clothes. Emma couldn't make enough to pay the loan to Mort Hipp. He foreclosed, and they lost the place.

Emma's mother was an invalid at the time; so Emma and the girls went to live with her daddy, Newt Yancy, and her mother. She could have a home and help her mother. Lala said if you became an invalid, you just laid there until you died because there was no medicine. (After Emma moved from Fletcher's land, his son, Elvin and his wife, Roxie Bratton Edwards, farmed the land to try and hold on to it, but they couldn't succeed either.)

THE DOG TROT

Lala said her Granddaddy's house was the only one she remembered. Most people had dog trot houses because they were easy to build and cool. It was called a dog trot because there was an open center hall with two rooms on either side of the open hall. Because of the danger of fire, the kitchens were "hooked onto" the house. Some of the houses had one large room with this kitchen "hooked on." Across the hall would be two rooms. One of these rooms would be for storage where a bed, the quilts in their box, old worn out clothes, clothes that were worn in a different season, and other items were kept. Lala said there was a big fireplace in the large west room where the parents and the younger children slept because of the warmth. There were rocking chairs, and Lala said her Granddaddy kept his Bible on a table close to where he sat. In this house, Emma and the girls slept together in one room.

Emma's brother-in-law had made some chairs and the quilt box. There might be four or five quilts stored. As for the clothes belonging to the girls, they might be hung on nails, nailed into the rafters. There were no clothes hangars, but then there weren't many dresses, either. Shelves on the sides of the wall were for folded items. There weren't many shelves, though, and there were no drawers. Hanging on nails on the walls were little bags, containing items. When I asked Lala about doorknobs, she said, "People didnt have any money for doorknobs or much use for one." They used a small rectangular piece of wood



NEWTON YANCY KIDS

BR: Fred & Alfred (Doc) Yancy
 FR: Sophronia (Nan-Yancy) Freeman-Emma (Yancy)
 Alice (Yancy) Williams



BR: Agnes, Herbert Yancy-Bob Buchanan,
 Fred, Jack Williams, Emory, Dock Yancy,
 J. W. Williams
 NR: Myrtle Edwards, Emma Edwards, Elsie Freeman,
 Jettie & Euel Cain-Alice Williams
 NR: Bill Williams, Lillie Pearl & Betty Williams
 NR: Jesse Yancy, Jr, _____, Shirley
 Yancy-Thula Tindall, Lala Yancy
 FR: Isie Howell, Fred Martin, Bedford Zinn
 Johnnie Albert Tindall, Betty & Jesse Yancy



Myrtle (Edwards) Frizzell - Emma (Yancy) Edwards

which was nailed loosely so that it would turn on the nail. This piece was nailed on the side of the wall where the cabinet door or the door of the home opened and closed. To keep the door closed, the piece of wood was turned so that it was against the door, preventing it from opening. "Mama had a brother-in-law, who was married to her sister. He got him a job and got some money to buy some things he wanted. One of them was a brown doorknob. He put it in his door," Lala told me.

In the hot weather, the porch or the open hall offered cool shade. Everyone had fans made of heavy paper with a handle. They would sit on the porches, fanning themselves. This stirred the air and also kept pesky flies away. At the back of the house would be the acres of fields where the cotton, corn, and the large garden plot was growing. Sorghum was also grown to make molasses, the main sweetener for the families, particularly if you had used all of the sugar in the barrel, which had been purchased in the fall.

Lala said the winters were colder then than they are now. They always had a "hard freeze" early in November. That was the time they would kill the hogs for meat, including sausage and the hams that were cured in the smokehouse there on the farm. Lala remembered that when it snowed, snow would drift in between the spaces in the logs that were not "chinked" well. The fireplace and the cast iron stove were the only source of warmth. The coal-oil lamp provided light for the family in the early years of the 1900s.

Water came from a spring or a well. Lala said everyone wanted to build close to a spring. Lala's Grandpa and Grandma Edwards, Roland and Jane, had springs by their house, but Lala's family had a well. Augers drilled the well and a windlass drew water out of the well. Every drop of water used had to be carried in buckets from the spring or well. When the girls went to the fields to work, they would drink the cool water coming from the springs flowing out of a bank. On the hot days of field work, early in the morning, someone would lower a bucket into the well and draw up enough water to fill a metal washtub. It would be left outside to be warmed by the sun and by nightfall, the water in the tub would be warm. When they came in from the fields, everybody got a pan full of the warm water and washed their body and feet.

"NOTHING NOW COMPARES WITH THE WORK WE HAD TO DO THEN"

The men, either alone or with the aid of friends or family, built the houses, the barn, the outhouse, and the other buildings on a farm, such as the smokehouse and the chicken house or "coop." Some farmers had a blacksmith shop also. By the side of the fields, ditches had to be dug so that the extra water could be drained off the fields. Lala said all the bushes had to be kept cut down from the sides of the ditch so the men could work on them. Once, when I was standing with Lala and Martha Dickson, looking down the overgrown path where Issac and Allie Pearl Bratton had their house, Lala said, "There used to be people living all down through here." These people were friends or most likely related to you in some way. Most of the time they could be counted on to help each other. These men, out of necessity, had many skills besides farming.



Sarepta Memories

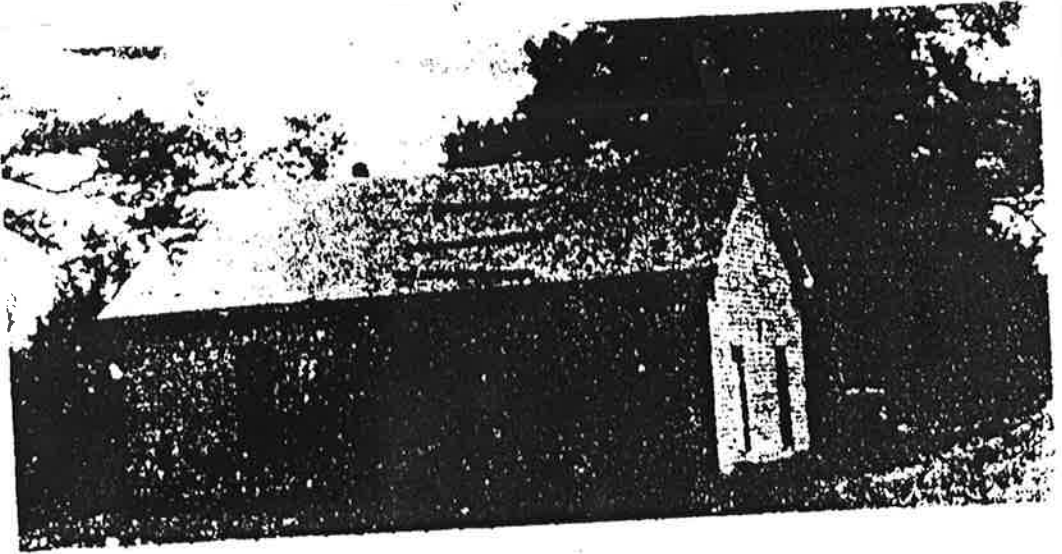
Sarepta School teacher Jess Seals shows off a camera in this 1920 or 21 photo made at the school. Students are seated, Edna Huckaby, standing Ruth Tyler, Loula Mae Dickson, Ora Houpt, Zoula Toliver and to the right, S. T. Webb. Bottom photo, Seals beside the school well. Photos contributed by Mrs. Icie Howell.

*Lula Yancy's
sister*

Nov. 1, 1986



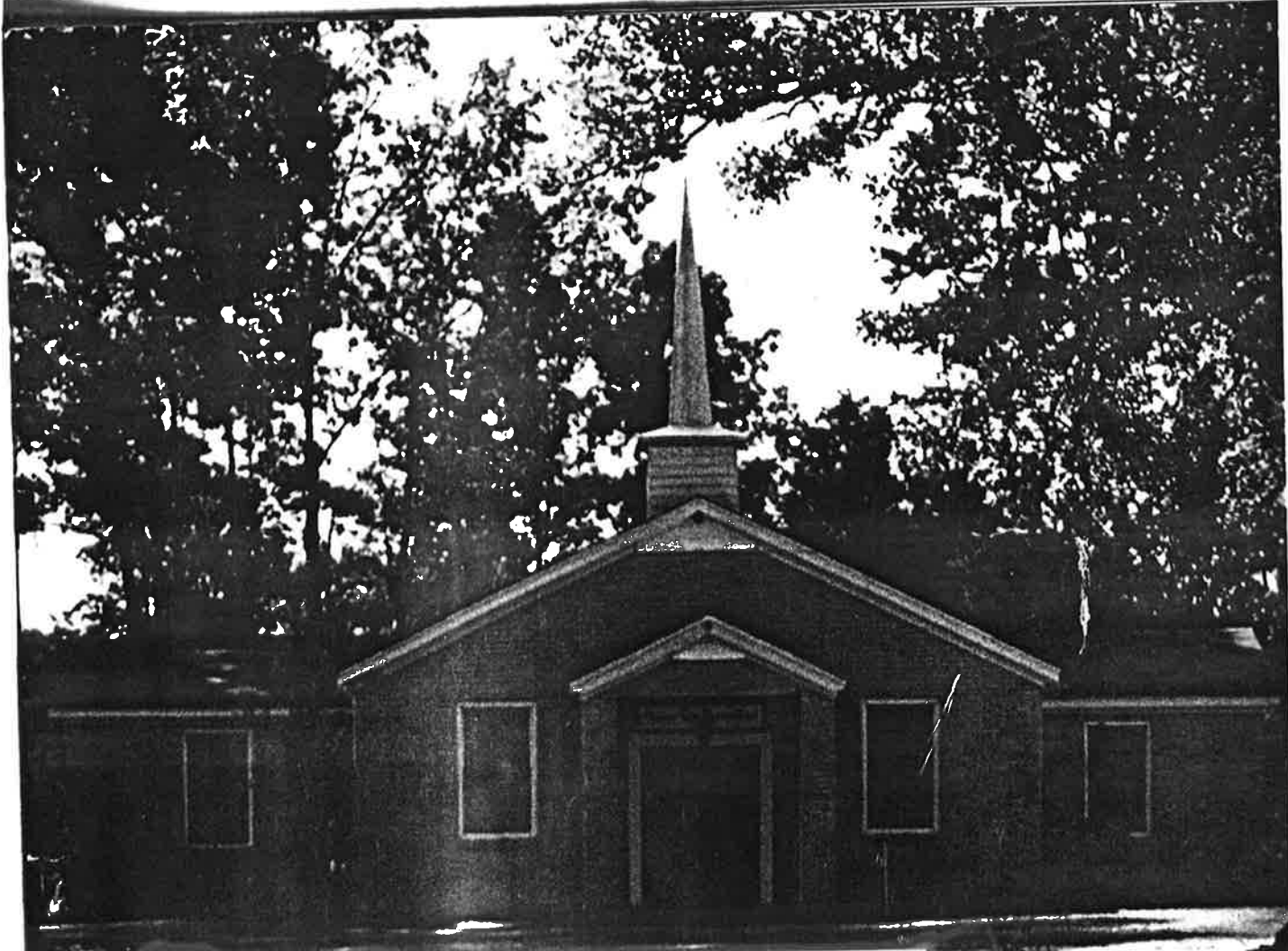
BR: Mary (Cricket-Yancy) Suggs
 NR: John Yancy-Layla (Edwards) Yancy
 Mary Jo (Yancy) Oneal
 FR: Martha (Hipp) Dickson



Sarepta Church

The picture of the old Sarepta Baptist Church was probably made in the 20's or 30's (note Model A car) when the building was being re-roofed. The bell in the steeple was rung for

all occasions, one longtime member said. She said it was rather sad when the bell tolled for funerals. Sarepta, organized in 1877, is one of the oldest Baptist churches in Calhoun County.



PLEASANT RIDGE BAPTIST CHURCH(CHICKEN BONE)

The nearest "big" town was Water Valley. It was about ten miles to the stores in Water Valley. The men only went a few times a year. When Grandpa Edwards went to Water Valley with two bales of cotton to sell and send on to Memphis, he would bring back a barrel of flour, a barrel of sugar, and anything else he needed and had the money to buy. Lala said sometimes the men would return with a stalk of bananas.

For the women in the family, the work was never done! When Icie was ten, and Lala was six, their oldest sister, Elsie, at the age of fifteen, had married Ben Freeman. Ben had brothers and sisters in Oklahoma, and they kept writing about their good crops. Ben and Elsie moved to Oklahoma, eventually settling in Durant. They stayed in Oklahoma all their lives. This left Emma with Myrtle, aged fourteen, as the oldest child to help her. By the age of six, every child was working, either in the house or in the garden or taking care of the baby. If there was no child old enough to watch the baby, a woman would lift the heavy bedpost and put it down on top of the baby's dress in order to keep the baby from wandering off while the mother went to the barn to milk the cows. If the mother had to go to the field, an older child would go with her to watch the baby. The baby would be put on a pallet (a quilt) to play while the field work was done.

BUTTERED BISCUITS AND CHOCOLATE PIE

Cooking was done every single day. There was no refrigeration except for the springs where the milk could be kept cool for the day. After breakfast and morning chores, the midday meal, called dinner, was prepared and served at noon to the men, including all the field hands, and the children. The leftovers from dinner might be eaten at the evening meal, supper. If all the food had been eaten, supper would be a very light meal like milk and cornbread. Any food that was eaten that day went into a "slop" jar to feed the pigs. Thus, the women did the preparation and cooking in the cooler part of the day, leaving the afternoon free for other chores that did not require a hot stove.

A typical day for Lala and her family would be two buttered biscuits with sorghum molasses for breakfast. Sometimes there would be a piece of meat - middling. It was mostly fat with a streak of lean meat in it. (It sounds similar to bacon.) At noon there would be vegetables, meat, and sweet milk, not buttermilk. When she went to school, she carried her dinner in a little molasses bucket. She might have a biscuit with some meat, a baked potato and perhaps a piece of chocolate pie. When I asked why they did not eat the eggs from the chickens, she said Emma sold the eggs to make extra money.

All of this food, molasses, meat, vegetables, milk and butter came from their garden or the animals on the farm. All summer, the vegetables were canned or "put up" to eat in the winter. Pork was eaten because much of the meat could be cured in the smoke house. The hams would hang from rafters over a hickory wood fire, after salt had been spread on the ham. The fire was not burning brightly; it was allowed to smoke slowly. The smokehouse would be filled with the



BEN FREEMAN FAMILY
BR: Elsie (Edwards) Gussie - Frank - Ben Freeman
Wayne & D Dane Freeman (Twins)



THE BEN FREEMAN FAMILY
BR: Frank Freeman -
FR: -----, Elsie -, -----

smoke as it penetrated the ham. The chickens were also eaten because the chicken could be prepared and eaten in the same day. This was not the case with the cow. It furnished the milk and butter.

Even the fruit was preserved as jelly, jam or dried. Lala said they would take planks of wood twenty feet long and put them on sawhorses. The planks would be covered with sheets. They picked the apples, peeled them and sliced them. Apple slices were cut and every morning they were placed on the sheets to dry in the sun. They would be taken in in the evening and put out again the next morning until they shriveled. When shriveled, they were put in a cloth sack. If they rattled when you shook the sack, they were ready. Some were sold to buy shoes for the winter, but Emma made some tasty fried apple pies with those apples.

Corn was always grown because it was a source of cornmeal and hominy. When the corn first "came in" or was ripe, the family ate some. Much of it, however, remained on the stalks until fall. Then it was gathered and taken to the grist mill to be ground into cornmeal. (The grist mill and the cotton gin were located in the same area.) The stalks of corn that were left in the field were ground up for silage. The cornbread was good to eat, but the flour in the barrel made the best biscuits and bread. Emma would make bread and put it in a pan on the back of the stove to rise. "Don't you kids go in that kitchen! You'll make the dough fall," she'd say.

In spite of all the hard work in the summer and fall, putting up the produce from the garden, by the springtime, there might not be much left to eat. Spring was called the "starving time" because all you might have left to eat was peas and hominy.

In addition to all the work involved with the food, there was the washing to be done and the clothes that had to be made for all the family. The washing was done in big iron pots outside. A fire was made under the pot, and, to keep them white, the white clothes were boiled, while someone stirred the pot with a clean stick or piece of wood. The colored clothes were not boiled, just washed on a scrub board. Another pot would be used to rinse the clothes. The family made their own supply of lye soap to use in the laundrying. When the clothes were rung out, they were laid over wire "strung from end to end" according to Lala. The ironing, of course, was done with the flat irons heated on the cast iron stove.

While the girls did the dishes in the evening, Emma would take her knitting needles and knit wool or cotton socks for everyone. To make the cotton yarn, the seeds would be removed from the boll of cotton. The strands were pulled and stretched to be spun on the spinning wheel. Lala said you walked down away from the wheel with the thread/yarn, and then you would walk up to the wheel winding the thread on a spool. Two pairs of socks would last you all winter. The girls tried to make a pair of shoes last all winter. The extra money Emma made from selling eggs might be used to buy material at the store in Water Valley. It costs five cents a yard. Patterns for cutting the pieces of a dress didn't exist.



BR:Jelly Dickson-Charlotte Hardy-Horace Hardy
 Larry Hardy (Hardy Men are Nephews of Lalas)
 NR:Cony Yancy-Martha Dickson-Gay Hardy-Lala Yancy-
 Robbie (Yancy-Cooper) Easley
 FR:Melba (Chilcoat) Yancy ~1998 40th BD



Pauline Anderson & Lala Yancy

95th BD - 2001



Martha & Jelly Bean Dickson
 Mrs. Easley & Lala Yancy

95th BD - 2001

There were none; you just made your own. Lala said the girls had two dresses for school. When you wore one, you would immediately take it off when you got home. Emma did have a sewing machine, as did most women. She also used it to make shirts for the men in the family. Men bought their overalls at the store, fortunately for the women. When the machine wasn't in use, Lala said they put a box over the top of the machine.

There were no luxuries, though Emma had a pair of gold earrings. Martha Dickson said Emma was the first woman she had ever seen with "holes" in her ears. The "holes" were made with a knitting needle, Lala said. Martha said sometime Emma would have broom straw in her ears instead of her earrings. After her mother died, Lala wore her mother's earrings until they fell apart. Lala and the girls did have the best powder puff, though. To get this powderpuff, a mole was killed and skinned. The hide would be saved, dried, and worked to make it soft. The skin sides were placed together and sewed. The "fur" sides made the powderpuff!

THE FIRST WORLD WAR

World War I happened between 1914 and 1918. Icie's husband, John Henry Howell was "called up" as was Delta Edwards, half brother of Lala and Icie. When I asked Lala about the war, she mentioned "Kaiser Bill" - which was the nickname for Kaiser Wilhelm II who ruled Germany. She did not know where Delta fought, but she said he stayed through the end of the war, which would have been two years since the United States didn't enter the war until 1917. Lala would have been about twelve when he returned. She said one day someone saw a soldier walking down the road and shouted, "Delta's come home." They all ran to see him. Unfortunately, Delta had breathed some mustard gas, and he had problems with his lungs all his life.

"If you got sick, you just had to get well," Lala said. There was very little medicine, except for quinine, liver powders, and, of course, home remedies. The older people used to look in the woods for a certain plant to use as a purgative. She said if you found a patch of this, you would take care of it so that others could use it too. Some of the remedies were interesting. If you had a cold, your mother would spread grease on an old woolen cloth and put it on your chest. Someone would blow tobacco smoke into your ear if you had an earache. For a bad cough, you swallowed a teaspoon of sugar mixed with a drop or two of coal oil. Coal oil was the kerosene used in lamps. The most "sobering" statement by Lala was, "If you could get your baby through the second summer (without dying), you would probably raise them."

Lala and her sisters did get an education. They went to Sarepta School until they finished the course. There were no numbered grades like 10th or 11th. She completed high school. Schools were ruled by the farm calendar. For six weeks in the fall the schools were closed to allow the children to help with the making of sorghum molasses and the other crops. They were out in March because children were needed in the fields. She said the children were sent into



Ray & Mary Freeman ²⁰⁰¹
Lala (Edwards) Yancy _{9/08}



L/R: Norma (Bratton) Crowell, Lala (Edwards) Yancy
Clinton Bratton-Norma & Clint are siblings-2000



Lala(Edwards)Yancy &
Martha(Hipp)Dickson
1999



Lala(Edwards)Yancy
Cooper, Linda Cooper
Sarepta Homecoming, Oct 2010



Lala Grace (Edwards) Yancy



BR: Brenda Winter & daughter Jan Easley-Freeman Cousin
 FR: Icie-Lala Annie Mae (Yancy) Buchanan-Velma Costner-
Thula Tindall-Agnes (Reid) Yancy
 Icie & Thula (sisters) Brenda (DAU) AN (E-DAU) OTHERS
 ARE COUSINS

the fields to pull up sprouts in the corn, cotton, hay, or sorghum. When Lala worked in the fields, her job was to plow the fields. There is a photograph of her as a young girl with her Grandpa Newt Yancy, and she is sitting on a mule.

TIME FOR SOME FUN, TOO

Family life was not all about work. There were times of relaxation and play with extended family. Since everyone lived in the same area most of their lives, there were lots of "connections" with various families. For instance, Jacob Bratton's oldest sister, Florence, had a daughter named Fanny. Lala and Fanny were close in age, and they played together. Jacob was our granddaddy. Icie played with Winnie Bratton, the daughter of Cornelia Bratton, another of Jacob's sisters.

Birthdays were not celebrated, but Christmas was. They didn't have a Christmas tree, but they'd hang their stocking over a chair. There would be candy and nuts in the stocking, and they might have a new doll.

A time of hard work was also turned into fun when they had a log rolling. All the men would come to someone's place to cut down the trees so there was nothing left but a stump. The logs of oak and pine might be ten feet long. To move them six men would stand behind the log with poles or some type of sturdy stick and roll them to an area of the field where they would be piled up. Meanwhile, the wives were in the kitchen cooking and preparing a big dinner for everyone. Then the pile of logs would be burned in a huge bonfire. When I commented to Lala, "Why did they burn all that timber!?", she replied there was no sawmill; so there was no alternative. When she was a teenager, she saw her first sawmill.

The local newspaper of Bruce or another town that size (Lala wasn't sure which town.) published once a week. Lala said she and her sisters couldn't wait to read the newspaper because it had a story - a serial - that had a different chapter every week. It's interesting to hear of the events they looked forward to.

There were several opportunities for the young people to have fun with each other. When Lala told me about them, I described them in one of my stories about my grandmother, **WHEN GRANDMOTHER GOT MARRIED**. From the way Grandmother described her childhood, I am not sure she was able to enjoy these activities, but they are there to be read.

One exciting experience that happened when she was a young girl was the first sighting of a car. Someone from another community telephoned and told everyone, "There's a car coming down the road!" Everyone had time to run outside and see a CAR! When I asked Lala if the main roads were gravel, she said, "Gravel? Nobody never heard of any gravel!" They were dirt roads with ditches dug on either side of the road to let the rain drain off. To get to the main dirt road, she said you took the wagon along a trail just wide enough to let the wagon pass. This road from your house would lead you to the main road. This



EDWARDS

Lala Climbing Hill to the BIG ROCK
near Providence Church up in woods



Lala(Edwards())Yancy & Big Rock
Lafayette Co. MS

road was "kept up" she said, but it was the only one worked on. Even then when it rained heavily, they might say, "It's too muddy to go to church," and they would walk on the trail if they could to attend church. Roads of gravel appeared in the 1940s.

Visiting with family members was usually guaranteed to be fun. There would be good food to eat and cousins to play with. You would be with aunts, uncles, great-aunts and great-uncles, too. One of Roland Edwards' sisters was Eliza Edwards Sharp. Lala said her Great-Aunt Liza wasn't little like the Edwards. "She had a bigger frame like Carlie did." She would scare the kids into behaving themselves. Upstairs in the house it was a little darker than the downstairs area. There was a rocking chair. Liza would tell them that "Granny Bunch" was up there in the rocker. "She'll get you if you don't behave yourselves," she would warn them. (In another version Lala said that Aunt Liza would show the children an old chair and call it "Granny Bunch.")

The Sarepta School went through the 11th grade, and when Lala was seventeen, she finished high school. She passed the examination at Pittsboro so that she could teach at Sarepta as a supply teacher. At that time, the teacher had to buy her own set of books. She taught for that year, and then she "hired out" to hoe, chop, or pick cotton. It may have been "The Roaring Twenties" for the rest of the country, but it was a poor time in Mississippi, she said.

THE YEARS FROM 1926 - 1989

Lala's Sisters

As I related earlier, Elsie Edwards had married Ben Freeman, and they eventually moved to Oklahoma. Myrtle didn't marry until she was forty or fifty years old when she married Jim Frizzell. Myrtle and her mother, Emma, lived together until Myrtle married. Icie had married John Henry Howell in 1923, and they lived in a big white house in Sarepta where John ran a garage. Thula married Prentiss Tindall.

In 1926 Lala married Elzy Yancy, a distant cousin. Elzy worked at a sawmill, and he had to be away from home until he finished the job he was working on. Lala said they had a nice house, and they were happy when Lala had a daughter, Brenda.

Lala told a funny story about Brenda when she was young. They didn't get electricity until around 1936, and Lala was skeptical about electric appliances. "I had an electric iron, and I was scared to death of that iron. Brenda was playing with a ball by the hearth. She threw the ball, and it rolled into the fire. It made such a loud noise when it popped that I was sure the iron had blown up." However, Lala said they were happy that they could have a radio and a Victrola. "Boy, could we see!" she said.

The thirties were the years of The Great Depression. Since everyone had a large garden, they had food, and they were self-sufficient. However, Lala said



Elzey(Alf)&
Lala(Newts) were third
cousins

Elzey & Lala(Edwards)Yancy



Isie(Edwards)Howell-Elsie(Edwards)Free,^mam
Lala(Edwards)&Brenda Yancy



BR: Bobby Winter - Mike Patrick & John Easley
FR: Brenda - Jan & Jill Easley
Lala - 96th Birthday - 2002



Shirley (Yancy) Wilson & Mary (Yancy) Scruggs
Lala Yancy - 96th Birthday - 2002



Lala(Edwards)Yancy at Top of Hill at Big Rock



Deloma & Bro Ritchey
Lala Yancy - *2002*
96th Birthday



2003



Brenda (Yancy) & Bobby Winter
50th Wedding Anniversary



Lala Yancy & Brenda (Yancy) Winter



Larry Hardy & Lala Yancy
Nephew-96 Birthday



Deloma Ritchey & Brenda Winter
Lala Yancy-96th Birthday



Martha & Jelly Bean Dickson
Lala Yancy-96 Birthday

they could not get any flour. "We had to eat cornbread for breakfast!" They also could not buy white sugar. From what she said they did not seem to suffer as the people in the cities did.

The history of the evolvement of the telephone as a means of communication is fascinating to anyone living in the twenty-first century. Even in the thirties and forties, telephone calls were routed through a switchboard. The switchboard operator was named Anna Taylor, and the switchboard was located in her home, since calls could be made day or night. Almost everyone was on a party line, which meant that you shared your telephone line with three or four families. You identified your in-coming calls by the number of rings or by the number of long and short rings. Dr. Reid, the local doctor, had a single line. If someone wanted to call the doctor, he or she had to call Anna, the operator, and she, in turn, called Dr. Reid to relay the message. Thus, the operator knew most of the town news, especially if she listened in on the conversations.

Dayne Freeman, the son of Elsie related a funny story about telephoning his Aunt Lala. He was in town, and he wanted to talk to Lala. Since he could not reach her on the phone, he decided to call his Aunt Icie. "Aunt Icie, I can't reach Aunt Lala on the phone. Do you know where she is?" he asked. At this point, the operator "broke in " on the conversation, saying, "You can't get her on the phone. I just saw her walk by here a few minutes ago."

"Trains ran everywhere," Lala recalled, "but the train didn't stop at Sarepta because it wasn't an important town." The train stopped at Water Valley and it stopped at Pontotoc. From Pontotoc, the mail was sent on to Memphis. Sarepta had a post office, but the mail had to be taken to and from Pontotoc. Lala said it was a great thing when a local man took the mail from Sarepta and rode his horse to Pontotoc. He would spend the night in Pontotoc and bring the return mail to Sarepta the next day. She said, "There were two stamps. One was one cent and one was two cents." I asked her about the mail during the years her Papa lived. "Nobody got any letters then," she replied.

In a letter to me in 1989, Thula said they didn't visit their Edwards grandparents, Roland and Jane, because of the distance that had to be traveled in a wagon. Lala said she wasn't sure that was correct. Thula said when Roland died in 1938 at the age of ninety four, their Papa's brother, Uncle Otis, wrote and told them that their Granddaddy had left each of his grandchildren a check for sixteen dollars. She did say that they went to get the check.

Elzy died in the early seventies, and Lala said, "We had a nice house, but I just couldn't stay there." She bought a trailer and it was located on the property of her daughter and son-in-law, Brenda and Bobby Winters. She lived there several years until John Henry, Icie's husband, died. Icie left Sarepta and moved to Bruce, MS. When Icie became ill, Lala moved to Icie's home to care for her. Eventually Icie went into a nursing home, and Lala moved back to the trailer. She said it was so run down. "I was just a poor widow woman, and I didn't have any money to fix it up." She said one morning when she was in the unrepaired trailer,

a woman came and said that two men were coming to repair the trailer. Through some government program, the trailer was repaired. Lala still continues to live in the trailer unless there's a thunderstorm. Then she goes to Brenda's. Lala is very afraid of thunder and lightning.

CHICKEN BONE AND SAREPTA BAPTIST CHURCH

The Baptist Church was always a major part in Lala's life. She grew up in the Sarepta area and as a young girl around twelve years of age, she was baptized and joined the church. Until she married, she continued to attend the Church at Sarepta. When Elzy was working on his sawmill jobs, she would go to church with the other wives in the area. Eventually, she joined Pleasant Ridge Baptist Church. This church was called "Chicken Bone" because there were always so many chicken bones thrown on the ground after one of their "Dinners on the Ground" after a singing or a church meeting. "Dinners on the Ground" are now held in the Fellowship Halls but not in those days because there was no fellowship hall. Fried chicken was an easy dish to bring because the women could kill the chicken and fry it in the morning before church. (There was no refrigeration, and, besides, everyone had chickens.) Lala enjoyed singing, and at one hundred years of age, she is still asked to sing. She also taught a Sunday School class for awhile. She reads her Bible everyday and "knows" it and loves it. At her 100th birthday party, several former preachers told how "she set them straight on some aspect of the scripture."

THE YEARS FROM 1989 - THE PRESENT

The Search for Lala's Story and Carlie's Story

Around 1989, I was contacting Maudene McCain in the Oxford area to find out more about the Bratton family. I believe it was then that I made contact with Thula and Lala. Grandmother Bratton, Carlie, had talked about her half-sisters, but I had never met any of them. Clint and I went to Bruce to visit our great-aunt Thula at her home. I think Lala was there then. Thula had darker hair, and she was very slender. (Since then, Lala told me that Grandpa Edwards used to call Thula, "Thula Small.") I believe Icie was in the nursing home then; so we didn't see her. I was so delighted to know other relatives. When I met Lala, it was like seeing my grandmother again because she reminded me so much of Carlie. It was just wonderful.

Myrtle had died in 1982 at the age of eighty four; so I never met her. Even though Icie didn't die until 2000, at the age of ninety two, I never met her because she was ill and didn't recognize anyone. In Oklahoma, Elsie died in 1990, at eighty three years old. Clint and I continued to visit Thula a few times until 1991 when my husband, Jim, and I moved to serve a church in Salt Lake City, Utah. Thula died in 1995, at eighty six, while we still lived in Utah. I would talk to Lala on the phone, and when I returned, I would see her in the Bruce, MS, area when I

could. Lala remembered so much about her life growing up. She remembered the families in that area. She is the only person living who knew my Great-Grandparents, Hugh and Sarah Bratton.

Even though my grandmother, Carlie, was fourteen when Lala was born, Lala could tell me many stories about her. Her sisters and her mother, Emma, like most families, shared stories about events in the lives of all family members. She told me about Delta and Elvin (Brother). I would take notes, as I asked question after question. She, along with Martha Dickson, showed me several family cemeteries and locations of various family members. Martha and Dick, who recently died, lived on the old Bratton place. Martha still lives there. Lala pointed across the road from the Bratton place and said, "That's where Hugh Bratton built a house for Jacob and Carlie after they married."

Every time I return to the South, I see Lala. Ray, Clint, Janet, my daughter, and I enjoy visiting her and listening to her stories. When we first began visiting, she would cook chicken and dumplings just like Grandmother Bratton cooked. Her pecan pies were delicious. Martha would come and eat with us. She usually brought delicious cornbread, and we'd have fresh vegetables and those wonderful tomatoes. Now she doesn't cook much, and we all go out to eat. Lala insists on paying for our lunch. At one particular restaurant, she brought out a hundred dollar bill to pay for our lunch. "Do you think the man has change for this?" she asked me. Through her, we have met Larry Hardy and become reacquainted with Horace Edward Hardy, the grandsons of Roxie and Elvin Edwards.

Lala broke her hip a few years ago, but it hasn't stopped her from going. When Martha calls and asks, "Do you want to go to Tupelo?", she's ready and willing, taking the walker and her purse. She is an important part of the life of her daughter, Brenda, her granddaughter, Jan, and all of Jan's family, including two great grandsons. Everyone knows about her iris garden, which she still works in. The hostas she planted are thriving in the Mississippi heat, even though they are supposed to be in the shade. On one of our visits as we parked the car and went into her home, we saw sheets and an umbrella shading the hostas.

Scraps of paper of all sizes and shapes containing notes from Lala have been scattered throughout my house. I have now collected them and tried to put them in some semblance of order to tell about the life of a remarkable woman and the times she has lived in. She has made my grandparents live again as I have learned so many family stories. I have laughed, cried and been amazed as I have listened to her. As we talk on the phone, we are separated by a thousand miles, but it seems I am sitting in her living room with a glass of iced tea, as we visit.

Dr. Longest, her doctor in Bruce, said, "Miss Lala, if you live to be a hundred, I'm going to throw a party." On the very day of her hundredth birthday, November 17, 2006, he and his wife baked a cake and brought it to his office. Lala came to the office, and they had a party.



Martha Dickson-Elaine Bishop)Ables
Lala Yancy 2006



LALA YANCY blows out the candle on her cake presented to her at Dr. Bruce Longest's office last week. Yancy was celebrating her 100th birthday. Yancy grew up in the Sarepta area and now lives in the

Chickenbone Community. She had no secret to long life, "Just live to be as good as you can and let the Lord take it from there." Read more about **Yancy** on page six of this edition.

Photo by Celia Hillhouse



100 B/ D party



100 B/L

The Journal, November 23, 2006

Lala Yancy Is 100-Years-Old

By JOEL McNEECE

Lala Yancy has lived through 18 presidents, seen the founding of Bruce, and remembers when no one around her had an automobile.

Yancy, who grew up in Sarepta and now lives in Chickenbone, celebrated her 100th birthday last weekend.

In 1906, the average life expectancy was 47 years. Only 14% of all homes in the United States had a bathtub and only 8% had a telephone. There were only 8,000 cars in the U.S. and 144 miles of paved roads.

"I've seen a lot of changes," Yancy said.

She credits good living and a strong relationship with the Lord for her long life.

"You've got to live to be as good as you can," Yancy said. "The Lord will take it from there."

Yancy recalled working in the field when she saw her first airplane.

"We were hoeing when it came right over the top of us," Yancy said. "We didn't know what we were looking at."

Yancy also told the story of the first automobile she remembers.

A phone call alerted the family of an approaching vehicle. Her sisters rushed to the road to get a look, but Yancy was too small to get there in time and had to settle for hearing the roar of the engine go by from a distance.

Her sister Icie Edwards Howell was the first in the family to get a car. It was after she married and definitely left an impression.

"We all thought she was uptown then," Yancy laughed.

There is no shortage of auto-

mobiles in the road today, and as far as Yancy's concerned, "there are too many."

Yancy has never been a stranger to hard work, whether it was working in the field as a small child, or gardening, canning or loading the wood in the house for winter while her husband, Elzey, worked his log truck.

"People used to have it pretty hard," Yancy said.

Yancy's father died when she was only 5-years-old and her mother, Emma, raised her and her three sisters - Icie, Myrtle and Thula.

Yancy attended school in Sarepta and later taught there as a substitute.

"We always had a real good school in Sarepta," Yancy said.

They didn't come to Bruce often when she was very young, but she does recall the people from Memphis (Bruce Family) coming in and harvesting the large trees.

"It was something to see all those trees down there," she said.

The only building she remembers from those early is the old Bruce Company Store building, currently being transformed into the Bruce Forestry Museum.

She also recalled several trips to Dr. Crocker's office, where Dr. Longest is today, and seeing her first picture show at the theater on the east side of the square where M&F Bank is today.

Yancy, who still enjoys working in the yard and maintaining an Iris garden in the spring, said she never dreamed she would live to be 100.

"That's God's path, not my doing," she said. "He'll call me when He's ready."



100 B/



Jill Easley at Table-Granddaughter of Lala

The big party was on Sunday, November 19, 2006 when Brenda and Jan had a magnificent party at the Baptist Church outside of Bruce. Almost three hundred people came to Lala's one hundredth birthday party. There were speeches, songs, testimonies to Lala about experiences with her. There were delicious cakes, balloons, flowers, and cards to add to the celebration. As Lala saw certain people come in, she was overwhelmed - especially some of Elsie's people. She must have had her picture taken a hundred times. When I asked her if she knew all these people, she said, "No, I don't." She had a glorious time and she said she never expected such a party.

Martha Dickson said when she takes Lala to see Dr. Longest, he always asks them, "Well, what are the Bobbsey Twins doing today?" She said that just tickles Lala. Much of Lala's long life can be attributed to the fact that she is independent, strong and determined. She says, "I guess the Lord's just not ready for me yet."

GOD BLESS YOU, LALA!



Lala 100 Birthday



Lala 100 Birthday



Lala 100 Birthday



John & Marianna Easley

• **John Easley** graduates May 4 from Mississippi State University earning a PhD in Industrial and Systems Engineering. Dr. Easley, a graduate of Cleveland High School, received his undergraduate degree in business management from the University of North Alabama where he was a starting basketball player for the Lions. In 2000, he received his Master of Science degree in Industrial Engineering from Mississippi State University. While working toward his PhD, Dr. Easley was a lecturer at Mississippi State's Bagley College of Engineering, and he also worked with the MSU men's basketball program.

Dr. Easley and his wife, Marianna, will be moving to Ruston, LA., where he will be instructing engineering classes at Louisiana Tech University in the fall. Dr. Easley is the son of Mike and Jan Easley of Boyle. He is the grandson of Brenda Winter and the late Bobby Winter of Bruce and the late Mr. and Mrs. Howard M. Easley of Vardaman. He is the great-grandson of Lala Yancy of Bruce and the late Mr. and Mrs. Dewell Winter of Bruce.



Kenneth Cain (White Hair)



Patrick & Jill Easley



Mike Easley



Brother Steve-Pastor of Calvary Baptist Church



Brenda (Yancy) Winter-Lala (Edwards) Yancy-
Lila Faye (Taylor) White-1st Cousin of Lalas



Lala(Edwards)Yancy-100 BD



Patsy (Cain) Patterson - Martha Joe (Cain) Covington
Melba (Chilcoat) Yancy - Peggy (Yancy) Harris





Clint Bratton-Norma (Bratton) Cowell
Nephew & Neice of Lala



BR: Normal Cowel-Ray & Larry Bratton-Horace & Clint Bratton
FR: Brenda Winter-Jan Easley-Lala (Edwards) Yancy
Norma, Ray & Clint are Siblings-Larry & Horace, Brothers



Mrs. Lala Yancy at the 2002 Sarepta Homecoming

Mrs. Lala Grace Edwards Yancy was born Nov. 17th, 1906 at Sarepta in Calhoun County, MS, the daughter of Emma Cassandra Yancy and Fletcher Edwards.

She was married to Rufus Elzey Yancy, who died in 1972. She had one daughter, Brenda {Mrs. Bobby D. Winter}.

Ms. Lala has one grandchild, Jan Easley and two great-grandchildren; John Easley, currently a student at MSU in Starkville and Patrick Easley who resides in Madison, MS.

Ms. Lala has taught Sunday School in the Sarepta Baptist Church for a number of years and is presently the assistant Sunday School teacher at the Pleasant Ridge Baptist Church.

On November 17th, Ms. Lala will be 96 years young.



NBC  UNIVERSAL

WILLARD SCOTT
Today Show

30 Rockefeller Plaza
New York, NY 10112
212 664 5488 tel

November 2006

Centenarian Lala Yancy
201 County Road 151
Bruce, Mississippi 38915

Dear Lala,

November is the month of a marvelous event, your 100th birthday. I am delighted to offer joyful greetings to you for such a wonderful occasion in your life of many memories to treasure.

It is my pleasure to say Happy Birthday, my friend. Best wishes and congratulations for this remarkable milestone, and may the Good Lord bless you.

With Love,


Willard Scott

This story was written by a neice of Lala(Edwards)
Yancy- Norma (C Bratton)Cowell of Fort Collins Co

Colorado. Her Grandmother, Carlie(Edwards)
Bratton was a half sister to Lala. (Edwards)
Yancy.

Once each year, Norma, her brothers, Clint and
Ray Bratton come to visit with Lala. Lala really
enjoys their b visits.

Norma, Ray and Clint also came to her Anniversary
party. Also her other neices and nephews came
from Texas that she had not seen in 40 years.
She really enjoyed them, their mother, Elsie was
Lalas sister. Elsie married Ben Freeman.

as of this date-2008. Lala will be 102 years
old November 17 and still lives by herself,
also still gets out in the yard and pickles with
her flowers. She does not cook anymore, her
daughter , Brenda does the cooking for her but
she is still able to stay in her trailer
by herself and manages real well.

In Loving Memory of

Mrs. Lala Edwards Yancy

November 17, 1906 – October 31, 2010

Her Journey's Just Begun

*Don't think of her as gone away -
her journey's just begun,
life holds so many facets -
this earth is only one.
Just think of her as resting
from the sorrows and the tears
in a place of warmth and comfort
where there are no days and years.
Think how she must be wishing
that we could know today
how nothing but our sadness
can really pass away.
And think of her as living
in the hearts of those she touched...
for nothing loved is ever lost -
and she was loved so much.*

- Ellen Brenneman

Prelude:....."It Is Well With my Soul"

*Song:....."The Pearly White City"

Opening Remarks:.....Rev. Steve Holiday

*Song:....."The World's Greatest Story"

Words of Comfort:.....Rev. Danny Spratlin

Song:....."His Eye Is on the Sparrow"
Larry Hardy

Message:.....Rev. Junior Ritchie

Congregation:....."When We All Get to Heaven"

Postlude:....."I'll Fly Away"

Pianist:.....Marianna Easley

*Choir:.....Carol Dean Hardin & Larry Hardy
Zenda Kay Bethany & Daughter Sarah
Cleo Hoeing & Daughter Carrie

Interment:.....Sarepta Cemetery
Bruce, Ms

Parker Memorial Funeral Homes, Inc.

Bruce – Dardaman, RTS