

Miss Ann

Uncle Willis Jones' widow had taken a notion to move back to her oald neighbor-hood if she could buy a place. She wanted me to go with her, so we fixt up and struck out fur Pike County. We got a place allright, but had some trouble with the title which delayed us several day.

The first place we went to when we got thar was the oald man Wilson Campbell's. My Aunt had taken panes to tell me all about Miss Ann, what a nice girl she was. I never let on that I had ever heard of her before. I had often heard of her and had always heard her spoken of in the highest terms. So I was ancious to see her and judge fur myself.

When we got thar, my first impression was thar had not bin a-nuff said in her favor. I soon found out that I was bashful in her presents. I would speak when I ought to have bin silent and silent when I ought to have spoke, I was not satisfide with myself. I discovered I was a fool and at a time I would have give everything to have bin smart.

We stayed here three or four days, getting my Aunts land title fixted up. My Aunt had put at me to help her wind up and move, so it was understood I was coming back. I got a chance to speak to Miss Ann and toald her that I would be back in the neighborhood and I wanted her to find out all she could about me before I come back, fur I mite be fool a-nuff to want to impose my company on her. Thar was several men in the country that I had served in the Army with. "They are well acquainted with me and I will refer you to all of them," I toald her.

It taken us about two months to make the trip thar and back again. When we got back I was vary busy

getting evrything ready fur a crop. I had vary little time to run around, so I dun a good deal of skeaming to be throwed in Miss Ann's company, unexpected to her. If I found out where and when she was going visiting, somehow I would happen up thar on business. This went on fur some time, till I thought I would advance a little and risk a direct attack.

One day I went to her Father's and spoke to her and ask if she would grant me the pleasure of her company fur a while. When it was granted, I toald her I thought it would take me something like a half a day fur me to get through with the little speach that I had studied up fur her to lisen to.

She sed she had no time fur that kind of a talk, but she would hear what I had to say. So we set down and I commenst bey saying that I had come fur no foolishness and I ment business. She had ample time to learn all that she could about me from the men that knew me. No doubt she had formed some idea whether I would sute her or not. Now was the time fur her to express herself and speak out plane and state her objections if she had any.

As fur my part, I sayd, "I have bin trying to see your faults but I have failed to find any. Everytime I have bin in your company I have left with a better opinion of you, so I have concluded that if you have any faults my love and respect fur you has blinded me and I will never see them."

She commence saying her Father and Mother never would consent to her marring anybody. I then asked her if she had ever heard them express themselves about me. She sed she had bin teasing them about me and the only thing they would say was that I would not suit her and the best thing she could do was to get shed of me.

I then sed, "You are the one to be the judge of

that, and I am satisfide you have your mind made up. I am here to answer all of your questlons."

She then ask several and I give her a brief history of my past life.

She then sed, "I have bin trying all day to cetch you in a story, but you are too smart to tangle yourself up."

I then sed, "I hope I can always make you think I am telling the truth, as thar is no reason to lie to you."

She sed thar was only one way I could do that, and that was fur me to never let her ketch me in a falshood, fur if she ever did she would never beleave anything else I toald her.

We had spent the hole day and yet I was not out of talk, but she would not give me a direct answer and sed she would take a week to think the matter over.

The next time I sean her, she ask me if I would be willing to steal her. I sed with her consent I would, but not before I ask fur her. She asked me to wait till Thursday fur her to talk to her Father and Mother and fur me to come and she would give me a answer then.

So Thursday I rode up jest as they were setin down fur dinner. I set down and et dinner with them but I did not see Ann. The oald lady's eyes showed she was not in the best humor in the world. Ann come in and I went straight to her and she sed we would have to run away. I then toald her I would ask them fur her first. She sed it was no use, they would insult me. I toald her that I would not be insulted at anything they mite say.

The oald man was at the barn. I went out and toald him that me and Ann had agreed to get married and I wanted his consent. 'he hesitated fur some time then sed she was of age and had a right to

make her own contract and he would say as a man that he had no objections to me, but it would brake him up as she was the main stake and he did not see how he could keep house without her as the oald ladys health was so bad. I felt sorry fur him. He toald me to go along and get married and say nothing to his wife fur she would insult me. The oald lady was the type that could chew you up and spit you out and never blink an eye doing so. I toald the oald man that I was going to ask her anyway, so I went to the house.

I had to run her down first. She would go out of the house as I would go in and in as I would go out. I didn't have to be a fool to see she had no love fur me. After a-while I got her hemed in and she comenst the racket herself. She sed no gentelman would ask a Mother fur her daughter. I bedged to differ with her and sed I did not think a gentleman would marry one without asking fur his loved one's hand. She ses we never would get married if she could help it.

I then toald her we was going to get married and I had hoped it would be agreeable with her. She sed it was not and never would be fur Ann was too good fur me. I toald her I thought so myself but I was not willing fur her to marry anyone else fur fear they would not treat her right. I was getting nowhere with the oald lady so I ses we was going to get married on Sunday night and ask her which she had ruther I would do, steal her girl or get married at home. At last she got some since in her hed and ses if we were bound and determined, to get married thar.

On Sunday night we was married at Ann's house and a man never was blessed with a better woman or kinder companion or one that was more respected

bey her neighbors.

I fixt up a house on my aunt's place and we moved into it. I dun vary well with my crop that year. This was the year of 1866. I paid one dollar and fifty cents a bushel fur all the corn I used and fifteen cents a pound fur all the pork. Flour was ten dollars a hundred. Everything was in perportion.

The citizens went around and taken invoice of the provision in the country and desided thar was not a-nuff to keep the people from suffering. They got together and sent a petition to the Governor fur help. I was selected to carry it.

I went in company with Emet Hargroves from Clark County. We went to the Rock and had a talk with the Governor. He seamed to think that it was not as bad as we represented it and said he did not have a dollar in the treasury but would do what he could to get the U.S. Government to help us people. Thar was some relief sent but nun reached our settlement and our people suffered.

Here I will relate a conversation that taken place that fall after we had got through with our crops. Thar was quite a lot of us met up together and the conversation turned on how we made it through. Some had dun without bread a short time, some had had no meat except what they could kill out in the woods, others had lived on the milk of one or two cows with large familys to feed. The conversetion lagged a little. One man had made no compliant a tall. Someone turned to him and said, "you must have dun prity well." He sayd, "Oh hell, it was bad a-nuff with me. If roasting-ears had a-bin fifteen minutes later, me ner my children never would have lived to have sean them. So quit belly-acking of hard times unless you know somthing about them."

On December, 1866, we had a son born to us. We

named him Joseph Wilson Jones. That year I rented a place two miles above the Jones' old mill, on the little Missouri River. Here I made two crops. There was more land than I could work so I rented a-part of it to Tom Teder. He was a jolly good fellow. Game was plenty so every day that we wasn't working we was hunting and many a deer lost their lives at the crack of our rifles. I made two crops here and done pretty well. I can truly say there was always food on our table with plenty of meat, so my family never went hungry.

Texas

The second year the Militia was organized I was commissioned 1st Lieutenant and was ordered to enroll all the men of military age. I dun so but could see thar was going to be trouble in the Country. I got a chance to sell my crop in the field and one time more come to Texas.

We crossed Red River at Haries Ferry and made camp in a post oak grove beside a big log that had bin struck bey lightning. The stump was some ten foot high with a mess of splinters. After supper I was bragging about how handy things was in Texas. Thar was a place far evrything, so I stuck all the dishes, provisions, even the childerns clothes and everything we had up in them splinters.

I woke up during the night to find the stump had caught fire and evrything had went up in a blaze. Thar was not a thing left to eat and nothing to put on the children to keep them warm, no tools to eat out of. It's needless to say how I felt. My wife wanted to turn back but I toald her that I didn't want any part of them oald Arkansas things anyway, we would get something better. So after talking a-while I got her to agree far me to go to a house and get the children some breakfast.

I then went to Gainsville and got new supplies. We had no futher trouble tell we got to Johnson County. Here my wife had two cousens, Wesley and Joe Campbell. They had jest sold thar land and had bought in Anderson County, was preparing to move. My wife wanted us to go with them, so we did.

Ann had washed but did not have time to iron our clothes, so she jest tide them up in a sheet and put them on top of everything in the wagon. Somehow the wagon sheet come untide and so did the sheet

with our clothes in it. All of our clothes fell out so the first thing we had to do was to go and buy more clothes so the children could have a change. I then told my wife we had a Texas outfit and I was proud of it but it was a-telling on my pocketbook.

We stayed here two years and did well. The first year I made six bales of cotton, plenty of corn and sweet potatoes, and had the best garden I have ever raised. This was in the year of 1870.

The second year I rented a low bottom place and planted a big crop of cotton, thinking I would make that crop and move west as I was not satisfied here. Just as I got my cotton planted there came an overflow and washed it all up. As soon as the land got dry I planted again. Here come another one of those floods and washed it up again. Beyond this time it was getting very late but I planted again in July. The army worm struck it and the hungry scamps never left a leaf on it. I sold it for a yoke of oxen and traded around till I got three yokes and a big wagon and moved to Hill County.

The first year that we lived in Anderson County we lived neighbors to a man by the name of Thorp. His wife and Ann was great friends and liked to be together as much as they could. The second year the Thorps had a chance to get a better place ten miles west so they took it.

On our way to Hill County we made it a point to go by and see them. We found both of them sick. Mrs. Thorp begged me to haul them west to where they could have better health, so I did. They had very little money. I never charged them one cent for moving them. Their health continued bad, so we all had to stay together that fall and winter.

When I got to Ft. Graham, I had \$2.50 and was out of everything to eat, so I got a job cutting and

hauling cord wood. I cut 36 cords at \$2.50 a cord. I then tuck a job of running a cotton gin fur the oald man Asque at \$2.00 a day through the winter.

Thorp was not able to do a day's work all winter. He was sick and so was his wife, so I had them to board. In the spring they got a house and moved into it, but it wasn't but a few days till Mrs. Thorp taken worse and they sent fur us.

When we got thar I sean thar was no hope fur her. We stayed and took care of her till the end. After she was baired, we took the children home with us. The baby was one year oald, he was born in our house the winter before. We kept them all till fall, then wrote fur Mrs. Thorp's sister to come after them. Thorp had left, went to find work. He got a job of bookkeeping but failed to write back. After the children had gone, he come back but was in bad health. He taken neumony and died.

(Forty years later, I met up with the baby boy that was born in our house. I had never heard of him till I met him. He felt like kin-folks to me.)

I made a crop that year at the mouth of Steel's Creek. Here I made 1500 bushels of corn, two bales of cotton. Corn brought a good price that year. This give me a start and I dun vary well fur the next two years. I then put up a gin in the Stiner Valley and done vary well with it. I made enough to buy a thrasher but I got the worse of the thrashing.

Time went along vary well till I lost my wife. This was in the year of 1882. From here on I have bin a roving wreck of my former self. I had four girls and two boys. I tried to keep them all together and do the best that I could far them.

I had a sister living in Palo Pinto County, so I sold out and moved up thar. On the way I lost twenty-seven head of cattle and was beat out of

seven hundred dollars on my gin, so I went to the bedrock. When I lost that good woman, it was my all. I have never bin satisfied since. I could not content my-self with one place long a-nuff to do any good.

I taken one trip out on the Texas Planes with my three youngest children, I left my two oldest girls with thar Uncle. My oaldest boy was out on the Planes with his Uncle W. R. Jones. This was in the year of 1884.

It mite not be amis to give a brief description of the Planes. It is a evaluation of three or four hundred foot above the level of the country on this side and when one gets on top, it seams to be level as fur as the eye can see. But that is a deception, fur at almost stated intervales thar is a lake.

It seams like the land had dropped in the shape of a basin some 10 or 12 foot deep. These vary in sizes from 20 to 100 acres. The grass was higher than the ankle, some spots ankle-deep and thar was spots that was knee-high, depending on what had bin grazing on it. It was as green as a purty green-eyed lady. The land was vary productive and when I was first thar you was seldom out of sight of wild horses or antelope. It was best adapted to small game.

You could ride fur milds without seeing as much timber as a riding switch. The grass was one solid sheet of mesquite as far as the eye could see. I kept thinking, if only I had come out here sooner I would have bin better off.

I had to go back to Hill County and see about my children so I went into the sheep business with my brother and stayed one year. I was not satisfied thar. I wanted to get back to the Texas Planes but I had to stop on the way to send my children to school at Thorp Springs.

After I quit the sheep business, I finally got back to the Planes and went in business with a couple of young men that was catching wild horses. We had to be fast and good riders. We would catch as many as 36 head in one day. They was always fat and in fine shape so we had no trouble getting rid of them.

We camped on the ground where Plainview now stands. We give the camp the name of Plainview. From this, the town got its name. If it wasn't Plain-View, I don't know what else a man would call it, as you could see fur milds and milds.

The sun-ups could be called nothing but God's work and He had something to do with the sun-downs. Thar was but one house on the Planes outside of Esticado, this was Parson Graves and is where Hale Center is now a town.

Thar was a small band of Indians that had not surrendered. A chief was sent out to bring them in. The word was out that a bunch of cowboys had bin killed over in New Mexico.

One day while we was rounding up some horses and was a quarter of a mild from camp, I sean some men heding fur our camp that I did not recognize. I had left my little boy at camp, he was about 10 years oald. I decided it was Indians. The other boys thought it was friends. I went fur camp in a hurry and before I got thar, I knew it was Indians. I picked up my Winchester, run the magazean full of caterages. Bey this time they were getting pruty close and had divided and was coming up on each side of the wagon. I had toald my little boy to get under the wagon and lie down and be still in the tall grass.

I toald the boys, the first Indian I sean put his hand on his bow or gun I was going to shoot him and fur them to rally around the wagon. But when the

chief got in hallowing distance he said he was a Chief and good friend to the white man. I ask where he was from. He sayd, "Ft. Sill." I wanted to know if he had a pass. He sayd he had. I then toald him to come up. The pass proved all right and after a few words they went on thar way.

Now I will go back a little and bring my book to a close. In 1884, I give up my Universal Doctrine and joined the Christian Church. I have bin trying to live a Christian life ever since. As I understand, it is something to be dun evry day of the week as well as on Sundays.

Leave off the eleventh Commandment, "Don't Do Up Your Neighbor Far Fear He Will Do You." But treat him right and stick to the truth always is my motto. If this is not Christianity, I know nothing about it.

In Politics, I was a Green Backer. I was a-posed to burning six hundred million dollars and issuing six per cent bonds in its place. Fur thirty years we have bin paying the interest.

I was also a People's Party man and today I beleave that was and is the best plat-form that has ever bin got up in the United States.

Now, in conclusion, in the last fifteen years I have made three trips to Arizona, two to Arkansas, two to the Gulf of Mexico and I don't know how many to Oklahoma, but thar is no great deal of difference in the country. "YOU CAN'T GET THE COONS ALL UP ONE TREE," and where a man is satisfied, that is the best Country fur him.

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