

Life sketch of Annie Louise Belk Parker

Father: James Jordan Belk (1841-1925)

Mother: Perlina Ann Beck (1847-1907)

Birth: 16 April 1868 in Dalton, Whitfield, Georgia

Married: 17 January 1886 to James Columbus Parker in Shellmound, Marion, Tennessee

Death: 03 January 1959 in Blackfoot, Bingham, Idaho

ANNIE LOUISE BELK PARKER

Things my mother, Perlina Ann Beck Belk, used to tell me about my generation of people.

About the year 1830, there was a family of Becks who lived near Chattanooga, Tennessee. Two boys were all I ever heard of --Joshua and Jacob. A family named Taylor who were all Pennsylvania Dutch lived near them. There were three children -- Martha, John and Mary. The Beck family and the Taylor family attended the same church, and their children attended the same country school near Chattanooga, Tennessee.

One day a well-dressed good-looking wealthy young man riding a fine horse came to town and later married Martha Taylor and took her to his home. The house was built on ground where Kentucky, Virginia and Tennessee joined. There were rooms of the house in all three states. He dressed her well and had servants do the work and wait on her. She began to notice suspicious looking men hanging around the house. One night she saw them gather in a room with her husband. She eavesdropped and found out they were planning a big robbery. When the police came from one state to get the men, they would go into a room of the house that was in another state, thereby escaping arrest. She heard them plan the robbery, and when they left she ran away and started back to Chattanooga. She would travel at night and hide by day. One day she lay beside a big log in the weeds and brush and two of the men in a searching party sat on the log and talked about what they would do to her when they found her. The next day she hid in a culvert under the road and saw them again. Somehow she was able to escape and return home. I can't remember his name.

After Martha Taylor had been home for several days her husband came to Chattanooga to inquire about her, and to see if she was safe. After being told by some of the people in Chattanooga that Martha was back home with her parents, he went out to talk with her, but Martha wouldn't see him. He told her parents he loved Martha very much and wanted her to come back home. When he couldn't see Martha he left. A few days after he left the home of Martha's parents, they read a write up in, the Chattanooga newspaper telling about her husband being shot and killed when he was in a bank robbery. Martha never seen her husband again. She later met and married a nice young man and lived the rest of her life in Chattanooga, Tennessee. She and her second husband had several children born to them in Chattanooga, Tennessee.

John Taylor joined the '49ers and went to St. Louis, Missouri where he

joined a wagon train. The wagon train was made up of people going to California to dig for gold. The wagon train was several months reaching California. They had to travel slow as the roads were mostly Indian trails and in some places there wasn't even a trail. They had to search for the low valleys where the wagons could go through without being wrecked. They had high mountain passes to cross and the people had to watch for the Indians and Raiders along the way. When John Taylor finally reached California and settled down to dig for gold, he wrote his parents, back in Chattanooga, Tennessee, that he had arrived in California. He found the price of food to be outrageously high and they had to build their own shacks to live in while digging for gold. John would go into town on week ends for supplies. He met and married a good looking young girl and they spent their life in California.

Mary Taylor married Jacob Beck. Chattanooga was a small town, and they were pioneers. They built themselves a log house on a hillside in the woods. The back end was high off the ground with the chimney next to the hill. It was a three sided pen built of split logs about 4 feet high with the fireplace built of rock inside, then filled in to the logs with red clay mud. From there up there were split sticks about 2 by 3 feet plastered inside and out with clay mud above the roof. They had no boards for a floor so split logs and dressed them as best they could with an ax. Called them puncheons. They got a floor next to the fireplace, then Jacob had to walk to town for supplies. It took one day to go and one to come back. Wild animals were too bad to travel safely at night. He left Mary alone. That night she never slept as the wolves came and she had to keep a big fire and throw chunks out under the back to keep them from coming in the house. After that they got the house done and sawed out a square hole for a window and had to hang a cloth over it. The house had no rafters, but what they called ridge poles inside, and Jacob got some fresh meat and hung it up on the ridge poles to keep animals from getting it.

One night after Jacob had got some meat, he had to go to town and left Mary again. After she went to bed, she heard a panther scream. It kept coming closer and jumped on the roof and tried to scratch a hole in the roof to get the meat, but couldn't get in. It then went to the window and tried to scratch a hole in the cloth over the window, but couldn't get in there, so it let out a big scream and that was the last Mary heard of the panther that night.

They lived near the Tennessee River, so Jacob cleared the land, split rails and built a fence around the land, then planted tobacco, corn and beans. The racoons, squirrels and other animals almost got their crop, but they managed to save enough to live on that winter. One day Mary went to the field to get beans to cook for their dinner, and as she came back she heard one of her hens squaking; she looked and there was a big bear trying to get through the rail fence at the barn. When the bear saw Mary it dropped the hen and started fighting to get loose. When Mary saw that the bear was fastened between the two rails on the fence and couldn't get loose, she ran to the woodpile; grabbed the ax and pounded the bear on the head until she killed it. When Jacob came from the field for his dinner, he asked Mary who killed the bear. When she told him she had killed it he about had a fit. He told her never to do such a thing again, as the bear could have gotten loose and killed her.

Jacob and Mary Beck had quite a family of children, but only five lived to be grown. Mary would weave the cloth and make the clothes for the family while Jacob would farm the land and raise the food. Times were hard and food and clothes wasn't easy to get, but they managed to get enough clothes to keep them supplied and food enough to eat.

One winter day Mary Beck was down by the river washing. She had a big oak stick to break a hole in the ice in order to wash. Some hunters with hounds were chasing a big buck deer; it saw Mary on the ice and made at her, so she killed it with her club. When the men came, they let her keep it. I guess my grandmother, Mary Taylor Beck, was never a coward.

The Civil War came and heavy fighting was going on around Chattanooga, Tennessee. My grandfather and grandmother, Jacob and Mary Beck, had a fine crop of corn next to the Tennessee River, and a big cabbage patch near the corn field. They planned to make Kraut for the winter. Times were getting better and the Beck family had more and could live easier. The Yanks camped on another hill near the Jacob Beck home. The Yanks then started their foraging (they called it, but I call it just plain stealing). They had big wagons with boxes about 4 feet deep, put 5 mules to a wagon and went to my grandfather's field, got a load of corn, then piled all the cabbage they could on top of the corn. They then drove through grandfather's yard to show what they could do and no one could stop them. They took all the stock but a little mule and one cow that was too poor for the troops to eat. They took all the hogs and all the chickens but one hen that got under the floor and stayed there till the war was over. The Yanks got everything there was to get; even dug up the ground around the house to see if anything was buried there. My grandfather managed to save one bushel of corn, they shelled it and their son, Lewis Beck, rode the mule and took the corn to the mill and had it ground. On his way home the Yanks took the mule away from him and made him walk and carry the meal home. The Beck family managed to keep the cow alive till spring when the grass came up. At night they would let the cow go down in the swampy places and eat the grass. They would get the cow back in the barnyard before the Yanks would get out stirring around in the morning. The cow got in fairly good shape, and one morning the Yanks shot her, but she got home and grandpa killed her. They salted down the meat and then hung it up in a room to dry. The Yanks crawled through a window in the house and stole all the meat. Later on the foraging wagons were out one day and found a bunch of hogs so they took them, big and small. While they were unloading the hogs, grandmother and the children stood in the yard and watched them. They dropped a little pig and it ran across the hollow to where grandmother and the children stood; then started back toward the Yanks when Kate Beck, a little fat kid took after it. All the soldiers stood and watched the race. Just as it got back to where the Yanks were, Kate caught the little pig and home she went. The Beck family kept the little pig in the house till it got so mean they had to make a pen in the chimney corner for it. Meanwhile some of the Yanks would come over at night sometimes to talk. One night when two of them were over, they took the pig.

When Jacob Beck and his family got out of salt they dug up the ground in the smokehouse and put it in hoppers and leached it down and boiled the water down till they could use it for salt. They had to eat bread made of

wheat bran when they could get it. Once the Yank camp cook came over with a big sack of bread and crackers, said they didn't need it and he hated to waste it. That was the only kindness I ever heard of a Yank doing during the war. There used to be a lot of fish in the Tennessee River, so they would put out a hook and line to catch them. Every time they heard a steamboat coming up or down the river they had to go get the fish, if they had any. If a fish was on the hook it would break loose. Sometimes they would let them go for they were so big they were afraid to pull them out. About the last year of the Civil War people could go to the Commissary and draw rations once every week. That was my mother, Perlina Ann Beck's job. She was 16 years of age then. My mother was born November 4, 1847, in Chattanooga, Hamilton County, Tennessee.

My dad, James Jordon Belk, was born March 4, 1841, in Dalton, Whitfield County, Georgia, and was raised near Dalton, Georgia. When the Civil War started he was called into service and fought with the Confederate Army. He fought all through the war and was never wounded. He fought in the Chickamauga fight, the Snodgrass Hill fight, the Missionary Ridge fight, the Lookout Mountain (Battle Above the Clouds) fight and the Chattanooga fight. I have often heard my dad say the Battle Above the Clouds on Lookout Mountain was the bloodiest fight of the war, for the blood ran down the mountain sides in branches from the men and horses. The Yanks sank steamboats in the Tennessee River and burned the bridges across the Tennessee River at Chattanooga.

After the war was over, my dad, James Jordon Belk, came back to Chattanooga from Dalton, Georgia and helped to build a new bridge across the Tennessee River at Chattanooga. While there he met my mother, Perlina Ann Beck. They were married in the home of my mother's parents, Jacob and Mary Beck, February 12, 1865, in Chattanooga, Hamilton County, Tennessee. After they were married they went back to Dalton, Georgia, where they farmed near James Jordon Belk's parents. My oldest sister, Mary Catherine (Mollie), was born January 11, 1866. They then moved on a farm belonging to a man named Pierre Horn. I was born on this farm April 16, 1868. I guess my brother, John Henry Belk, has the two bedsteads my dad had made that year. They were made of wild cherry. On August 15, 1870, my brother, John Henry, was born on the same farm. Another sister, Le Anna Adeline, was born February 28, 1872, on this same farm near Dalton, Georgia.

From about 1871, I can remember things. I can remember when we lived in Georgia, all the lights we ever had were pine torches of what was fat pine. It was so rich you could almost see through it. They had to be near the fireplace so the smoke could go up the chimney and the tar could fall on the hearth of the fireplace.

When we were living in Georgia, I went to school with my oldest sister, Mollie. We were playing with the other kids and having a lot of fun when I got stung by a yellow jacket. It hurt so bad I kept crying till the teacher had sister Mollie take me home so Ma could doctor it.

In the year 1873, when I was five years old, we moved to Jasper, Marion County, Tennessee. We moved as far as Chattanooga, Tennessee in a wagon, then Ma and us four kids went to Shellmound, Tennessee by train. My brother John Henry, had his first new suit on and as we were leaving Dalton,

Georgia, he fell off the wagon in a big mud hole. Ma had to take John back to the house; wash the mud off of him and put him on another suit before we could get on our way. We stayed that night at a Methodist Camp ground. There were no houses in sight; it was a big brush harbor in the woods. The benches were made of split logs with legs made of split sticks. That night Pa and the driver of one of the wagons made a pen of the benches and covered the top with more benches to keep the wild animals out. We all slept inside. When we got to Chattanooga the next day, ma and us four kids got on the train, it was a little old timer called a narrow gage. We were headed for Shellmound, Tennessee. Pa rode horseback all the way from Dalton, Georgia to Jasper, Tennessee. Ma and us four kids were met in Shellmound by Ma's sister Kate Avery and family. We had to ferry across the Tennessee River to reach the farm where we were to live. I had never seen a bigger stream than the Cuyahulla Creek, which I had'often crossed in Georgie. We kids were disappointed to find we had to live in a log house, the first we could remember seeing. Vie lived on this faz'm for one year and all the family except me chilled all summer. My second brother, James Henderson, was born May 4, 1874, on this farm near Shellmound, Tennessee.

When we lived in the log house, after moving to Shellmound, Tenn., we had no pine to make pine torches for a light so we had to make tallow candles for lights. Next we got brass lamps. They looked like a small oil can. The wick was about the size of a small pencil and the lamp held about one half pint of coal oil. The lamp had a little chain with a cap on it. We put the cap over the wick to put out the light as it was too dangerous to blow out the light. The lamp gave nearly as much light as a match, so we never set up at night to read. In fact, we had nothing to read except the Bible, school books, such as the McGuffey's Reader and Webster's blue back spelling book and the Almanac.

When I was a young girl, I guess I was the only child in the bunch that wanted to know everything. When Pa was gone from home, I would sleep with Ma. After we would go to bed, Ma and I would lay there and talk. Ma would tell me how old I was when such and such happened. I will tell you a few childish things that happened in my younger life. When I was a small girl, two girls came by our house one Sunday. They were riding horseback and one of the girls had a little grey kitten and gave it to me. I put it in the s8okehouse and the next morning it was in the soap trough. Ma told me I couldn't keep the kitten, so she put a string around its neck with a rock tied to the other end and told brother John and I to take it and throw it in the branch and then run. We threw the kitten in the edge of the water and then run, but the water wasn't deep enough to drown the kitten, so we had to go back and take it to a deeper hole and throw it in. We heard about it at noon when Pa came to the house for his dinner. Pa said someone had drowned a cat where he went down to drink from the branch while working in the field.

On another time Ma sent brother John and I to drive the calf to the woods to eat grass. We went till we found a muddy place in the road and a big pine tree by the fence. The big pine tree had a lot of rosin on it and us kids liked to chew the rosin. John and I stopped to pick the rosin and to play in the mud hole. We forgot all about the calf and went home. When we got home Ma told us a man had come by the house and told her that he had seen where a bear had crossed the muddy place where John and I had been

playing. We never had to drive the calf off to eat grass in the woods again.

That summer we had a big cotton patch in front of the house with watermelons in it, and a large orchard near by. One Sunday our cousin, Nannie Cathrin Morton, was at our house and ma and pa went to meeting and left us four kids and Nannie at home. We were playing in the orchard and sister Mollie climbed up in an apple tree to get some green apples. When she jumped out she caught her dress on a snag and tore the skirt off at the waist. Brother John got scared and ran to tell ma. When ma and pa came home from meeting, John wasn't there. We thought he was in the cotton patch hunting melons. We all started looking for John and some of our neighbors came over to help us hunt for him. We found him asleep by the road in front of a Church about a mile from home. When pa asked John what he was doing there, he said he went to meeting but the preacher never came.

The first canned fruit I ever saw, ma had filled a blue stone jar full of peaches, turned a saucer over the top and filled it with beeswax. Then she dug a hole in the smokehouse and buried it. One day sister Mollie and I were playing in the smokehouse and saw the top edge of the jar, Mollie got the hammer and went to work to get the ring up. She broke a piece of the ring out and we thought we had made a big find. We got to eat the peaches for our dinner.

I can remember one time when pa hauled a load of wheat to Jasper, Tennessee. When he was coming home that night he had the empty sacks in the wagon, and was driving a four horse team. It was a dark night and there was heavy timber on each side of the country road. Pa was driving along about midnight when he heard a panther screech back in the woods. It kept coming closer and closer; pa knew it was following him, so he started looking for it in the trees near the road. He discovered the panther when it jumped from one tree to another and knew it would soon jump on the wagon after him. He slid out of the wagon seat and crawled under the sacks in the back of the wagon. He had nothing to protect himself with but a small pocket knife. He got the knife out of his pocket and lay waiting to see what the panther would do. All of a sudden the panther let out a big scream and jumped from a tree on to the wagon. Pa said he thought he was a goner, but the team got scared when the panther screamed and started running down the road. This scared the panther and it jumped off the wagon and ran for the timber. The team ran until they hung up on a stump by the road. Pa had to get out of the wagon to get the team off the stump. He thought the panther might try to attack him again, so he got his knife ready to start cutting the panther, but he made so much noise getting the team off the stump it probably scared the panther off and he got home safe.

My mother, Perlina Ann Belk, used to weave the cloth and make all the clothes for the family, also worked in the field at times. I can remember seeing Ma go out and plow till noon and then pick up an arm load of brush to build a fire to cook dinner on. Pa would feed the horses, come to the house and eat his dinner, then lay down on the porch and sleep till time to go back to work. Ma would cook dinner, get all the kids to the table and then eat. After dinner Ma would take care of the small children till time to go back to work. (I never thought that was fair, and still don't).

In the fall of 1874, we moved to Dr. Reed's farm. In August my baby brother, Jimmie, took the measles and died August 13, 1875. He was buried August 14, 1875, in the Reed Cemetery near Jasper, Tennessee.

On brother John's fifth birthday we went over to Uncle John and Aunt Kate Avery's house. When we started home in the evening, Pa and Ma and us kids were walking along the country road when brother John started running on ahead of the rest. All of a sudden he started to screaming and pa ran to him; he saw a big snake had bit him. Before he could get John away the snake bit him again. We were in front of our neighbor's house and when he heard John scream, he ran out; grabbed a hoe and killed the snake. It was one of the largest rattlesnakes they had seen in that part of the country. They counted the rattlers on the snake's tail and there were an awful lot of them. They rushed John into the neighbor's house and started putting tobacco juice on the snake bites. In the meantime, pa jumped on a horse and headed for Jasper, Tennessee, to get a doctor. Brother John began to get real sick, so the neighbor caught some chickens; killed them and put the hot chicken meat on the snake bites. The meat would turn green in a few seconds. They kept doing this till the doctor got there. The doctor said if they hadn't have put the tobacco juice and the hot chicken meat on the snake bites to draw the poison out, John would have died before he got there. Brother John was a long time recovering from the snake bites.

I had never seen any silver money until the Christmas when we moved to Tennessee. We always had 5, 10, 25, and 50 cent paper money which were called shin plasters. On Christzas night we kids went to bed ea.ly to wait for Santa. Sister Mollie stood up in bed where she could peep through a crack in the door where it wasn't closed tight. She wanted to see if she could see Santa. After a while Mollie saw Pa and Ma putting things in our stockings. Pa dropped something and started hunting in the ashes to find it. It was a nickle and he put it in Mollie's stocking. At that Mollie yelled out, you quit putting fire coals in my stocking.

In September when the Muscadines were ripe, pa would go down on the hillside close to the house, and shake the Muscadine vines, and us kids would pick them up and put them in bushel baskets. Pa would carry the Muscadines to Shellmound, Tennessee and sell them to the passengers of the train for \$1.00 a bushel.

In October 1876, we moved to a bigger house on the farm. The house was near a large spring. We got water to drink from the spring. I had my first and only chill, and today the smell of watermelons makes me taste that chill. Pa began to clear the bottom land so he could farm the land. The land had heavy timber and underbrush. Pa hired men, mostly negro men, to help him clear the land and do the hard work around the farm. One of the negro men named Henry, got married while working there and pa hired his wife to cook for us. The house had been a slave owners home and the kitchen was across the yard and there was a bedroom at the back for the cook. In the mornings, Henry would get the other negro men out to feeding the stock, while he and his wife, Nance cooked their breakfast. Their breakfast was a big pan of cornbread, fat meat, clear grease from the meat, sorghum molasses and buttermilk. Ma used to tell Nance to fix something better for the mep to eat, but Nance would say, that food is good enough for any nigger to eat. The negroes had to eat off the naked table. When the men would eat and

leave for work, Henry would fix the table with a white table cloth while Nance would bake biscuits, fry ham and eggs, make coffee and get ready for the white folks to eat. After we ate, Nance and Henry would eat. That year another brother, Willie Samuel, was born May 14, 1876, on this farm near Shellmound, Tennessee. Henry and Nance did the house work and helped to look after us kids.

In the fall we older kids had to start to school. The school term was for three nonths a year. We had to walk about two and one-half miles to get to school. We had to walk over a rocky ridge and most of the time we were bare footed. Often the ground would be white with frost and icicles, but we kids would run to keep warm. I had a two feet square shawl I would wear to keep me warm. We went to this school for two terms. Sometimes the school would be a subscription school and the teacher didn't know much more than the kids, and sometimes it would be a free school with a very good teacher. The school was never more than three months a year, and often the kids would have to stay home and help with the work.

My brother John and I always played and worked together. John was always an unlucky kid and a little lazy. When we were young kids, pa had two men hauling manure to the garden back of the barn. John and I were playing around the barn and when the men got a load of manure off the wagon and would start back to the barn, we would jump on the wagon and ride. John got in a big hurry to beat me to the wagon; he got there just in time to get his head up and get a spade full of manure in his face, and a gash in his head. We had two big shuck pens under a shed and nearly all the shucks were fed out of one of the pens, so John and I would climb up in the full pen and jump down in the other pen. Once John had jumped down in the pen and told me to wait till he got back up before I jumped. When I did jump the top rail I was standing on slid down and caught John on his ohin and almost broke his zeck. While we lived on this farm another brother, Benjamin Horace, was born January 17, 1879, near Shellmound, Tennessee.

We later moved to a 100 acre farm, it had two houses on it. We lived in one and uncle John Avery and family lived in the other. Uncle John's brother, Allen Avery, lived with him. They all went together and bought the farm. Allen Avery built him a house on 50 acres of the land, Pa got 25 acres of the back corner of the land and built us a house, and uncle John Avery and family got the rest. We had lived there two years when uncle John bought out a store in Shellmound, Tennessee. Pa bought out uncle John's part of the farm when he moved to Shellmound. We moved into the house uncle John had and was close to the school house which was just built.

From the time I was born, I guess I was Pa's favorite kid, at least I always went with him to the field and helped him with the farm work. Pa raised wheat, oats and corn; mostly corn. They cut the wheat with a cradle. The cradle was a long blade on a frame with five fingers on it. We would follow the cradler and bind the grain. We would get an arm full of wheat, pullout a handfull of strow, wrap it around the bundle; twist the ends together and stick it under so it wouldn't come loose. I got so I could keep up with pa when he cradled wheat with us kids. That sunmer I had my first and last tooth ache. I had to go to town and get it pulled out. Pa and I never started anywhere horseback that we didn't race before we got back home. If there was any business that I could attend to, I was always

sent.

One time when I was about eleven years old, Pa decided to get some fruit trees and start an orchard. He ordered the fruit trees and when they came he sent me to Shellmound, Tennessee, to get the money to pay for them. I started home with the money and was nearly a mile from home and about a half mile from the ferry when a crazy man stopped me, but he went on down the road. I was scared stiff. I watched him till he got down the hill and started up through the bottom. If ever a little kid run, I did. I got home safe wth the money. We heard the crazy man got across the Tennessee River and tried to break into a man's house that night and the man shot him.

My folks belonged to the Missionary Baptist Church, but we all went to the Methodist Sunday School. The Sunday School would start in the spring and end in the fall. We had a woman superintendent when it was the Southern Methodist and a man when it was Northern Methodist. We would all go to Sunday School together. About once every month we had church at the school house, with a circuit rider for a preacher. One preacher I heard preach at church was a big fat man. He said one time he went to see a sick woman on the side of the mountain. They were very poor people, the floor had dirt about an inch thick on it, their clothes were all ripped, torn, and raveled at the seams. Their shoes were all run down at the heel and their collar's were as greasy as they could get. The man of the house was so lazy he wouldn't work. The preacher said he got so mad when he saw what a mess they were living in, he came down from their home like a car load of thunder and lightning. One of the preachers took his text about a green pond on the mountain near a little spring. He compared a sinner to a wild hog, said you could hem them in by a gang of religious people, and he would be good, but the first chance he would get to go wrong, he would say boo and be gone. Also one preacher compared a sinner to a yeller hound who would fall on its back with its tail between its legs and howl for help when they would get into trouble. Some Preachers!

My hone was always a place where everyone was welcome, rich or poor. After Sunday School we would enjoy ourselves as best we could. Sometimes there would be singing in the afternoon at some church, and we would all go. When the weather was real nice, we would go to the woods and hunt for wild fruit or nuts. When it was watermelon time we would look for some watermelon patch. In the winter time some of the youngsters would gather at my home and we would play games or pop some corn, eat nuts or maybe roast potatoes in the fireplace, anything for past time. Pa and Ma would always join in with us and we kids were always happy to have them join in on the fun.

Pa always kept good horses and would let us kids ride them most any time we wanted to ride them and go places. One of Pa's horses was the fastest in the country. I would always try to get it to ride. We girls all rode side saddles. When I would be riding Pa's fast horse and wanted to have a lot of fun, I would get with a bunch of boys and challenge them for a race. I would usually win and that would make the boys mad to think a girl could out run them on a horse.

One day in April, a bunch of us went to the Tennessee River to do some fishing. My sister, LeAnna Adeline, was younger than I and she would always want to fish where I did. The river had been up and left the banks slick

and muddy. The water was about 20 feet deep where I put out my pole and line. I was sitting there waiting for a fish to bite my hook when I heard some one gasp for breath. I looked around and there was sister Adeline in the river with just her face out of the water. She had caught hold of some bushes on the river bank, but she couldn't get out. I got hold of a limb of a tree overhead and got one foot against a bush at the edge of the water and braced myself. I reached out and got Adeline by the hair and drug her to the top of the bank. She said I saved her life and for once I pulled her hair and it didn't hurt one bit.

We kids all worked, played and had a good time as kids. I don't think my dad or mother ever refused to let me go anywhere I wanted to go when I was at home with them.

My sister Mollie had run away and married Willis Warner (Judge) Brown, and my sister Adeline was planning to run away and marry Elijah Burns Alton. When James Columbus Parker, my old sweetheart of 12 years, asked me to marry him, I told him I wasn't going to run away and get married, if I wasn't worth asking for, I wasn't worth having. James Columbus Parker and I had been neighbors, schoolmates, worked together, and had our little quarrels together.

One night James Columbus Parker got enough courage to ask Pa and Ma if we could get married. We went in the room where Pa was reading and Ma was knitting. James Columbus said: Mr. Belk, I have come to ask you and Mrs. Belk if you will let Annie Louise (Lou) and I get married. Pa sat there for a minute, then started to smile; I knew he was going to pull some joke or something, so Pa said: Well Jim, what would you do if Ma and I would say "NO". James Columbus was a witty young fellow, so he looked up at Pa and said: Mr. Belk, I wanted to marry your daughter Mollie, but Willis Warner (Judge) Brown ran off with her. Then I decided I would try and get Adeline, but Elijah Alton seems to be taking up all her time, so I guess if you won't let Annie Louise and I get married, I will just have to wait till your little daughter, Myrtle grows up and try to get her, I just have to get one of your pretty daughters. Pa and Ma really had a big laugh, then Pa said, Well Jim, you would be such an old man by the time Myrtle gets big enough to get married, I guess Ma and I will let you and Annie Louise (Lou) go on and get married.

James Columbus Parker and I were married January 17, 1886, in Shellmound, Tennessee. After we were married we went to live with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Lewis Parker. James Columbus had started a crop with his father that year. Now if anyone thinks they can marry the pet boy of a family of five girls and two little boys, and live in paradise, just let them try it; I did.

James Columbus Parker and I later moved to Whiteside, Tennessee, and lived in an old church house with three rooms added to make more room. An old English woman lived in part of the house. When we had lived there about a month, James Columbus got sick. He had to walk a mile over to Aetna, Tennessee to where he was working. We decided to get us a house and move close to his work. We rented an old powder house with two small rooms in Aetna, Tennessee, and moved in. The house was on the side of a mountain and frogs, snakes, scorpions, and about everything would come through the

cracks and get into the house. James Columbus operated an engine, and after he got sick he had to sit down to do his work. He wasn't able to stand all day to work.

After we had moved to Aetna, Tennessee, one of James Columbus' sisters came to stay with us and go to school in Aetna. Our first baby, Harry Homer, was born July 11, 1887, in Aetna, Tennessee. We had no one to stay with the baby and I while James Columbus was working, so his sister would lock the door on the outside and go to school and leave the baby and I in the bed. In August I went down to my parents home to stay. Later James Columbus quit his work and moved down there too. When he was well and able to work a little, he started fixing up an old house on his brother-in-law's place. The place had been used for a corn crib and a stable. James Columbus built a chimney, put in a floor and fixed it up the best he could, and we moved in the house that winter. In the spring a cow that pa gave me came fresh, so we had plenty of milk and butter to eat. One of my little brothers set a white hen and hatched thirteen little chicks and he brought them over and gave them to me. My sister-in-law had a hen to come over and set on a bunch of eggs under my house and hatched thirteen little chickens. When the wild blackberries got ripe, I picked blackberries and sold them for 10 cents a gallon. I made enough money to buy the hen and little chickens from my sister-in-law. I also made enough money to buy some wool. I carded and spun the wool then knit sox which I sold for 25 cents a pair. That year I sold some of what chickens I had raised and sold eggs that we didn't need for our use. What chickens and eggs I sold that year came to \$12.00. I kept 26 hens for the next winter. That was all we had to live on that winter. James Columbus would work when he was able, but mostly for his father. His father was building a house. We managed to buy meal and some meat with what money we had, and in the spring we raised a good garden. We managed to get by that year.

The next winter we moved over near Dad Parker's home and James Columbus helped his dad farm. My brother gave me a pig, so we killed it and made our meat. I raised a few chickens, but the hawks got some of them. I saved what chickens I could for our own use. We had two cows, so I sold some butter. Butter was only 10 cents a pound, I used most of it for cooking. We had another baby boy, Herschell Hendricks, born April 10, 1889 near Shellmound, Tennessee.

The winter of 1889, James Columbus wanted to go to Texas. His dad gave him a hundred bushels of corn for his year's work. He sold it all to go to Texas on. I didn't want to go, so pa said if we wouldn't go to Texas he would give us a set of house logs, 1200 feet of lumber and two acres of land on his farm near the road. We moved in the house with pa and ma and helped with pa's crop and helped dad Parker too. Our baby, Herschell Hendricks, took spinal meningitis in April 1890, and was sick all summer. We thought sure we would lose him, but he managed to recover.

In July 1890, there was a big building boom at Bridgeport, Alabama, which was about 18 miles from where pa lived. Pa, brother John and James Columbus decided to go over there and work. Ma and I went to work and made a big tent for them to live in while they worked. Ma decided she would go along with the men and do the cooking for them. She left me at home with my two babies, Harry and Herschell, one sister, and two brothers, Horace and

Chris. Ma stayed one week and came home, then I went down to cook for the men.

We set up our tent. about two miles from Bridgeport. They were grading for streets, making brick, building railroad shops and office, and all kinds of factories from where we were camped on into town. There were lots of work to be did around Bridgeport. The first night I was there it rained till it was too wet to work, so James Columbus and brother John took the wagon and went home to get supplies. Pa, baby Harry and I stayed at the tent. Our tent was under a large tree. The next night it rained, thundered and lightning, and rain sifted through our tent into our faces and we had to cover our heeds before we could sleep. By the next morning I couldn't take it, I had enough of it and started for home. I had two miles to walk and carry Harry through wet weeds and bushes. I got lost and was wet to my waist when I finally found the railroad station and caught the train for home. The next morning the rain was all over and the sun was shining, so I went back to cook for the men. I had an over skillet, tea kettle, a big kettle and a coffee pot to cook in. I cooked the meals out under a big tree and sommetimes I would start a meal and here would come a shower of rain and put my fire out. We had a tool box to keep our food in and we used the tool box for our table. We had no chairs so we sat most any place we could find to sit while we ate our food. Part of the time I cooked for five men. If you think that is fun, try it.

After we were at Bridgeport, Alabana for about three wecks we built a shed to live in and brought down a stove, a table, and some chairs from home. I got more boarders and needed more room. We got some lumber and built a big one room house. Pa and brother John decided to quit working there and went home to work. James Columbus and I stayed on and worked. I only got \$10.00 a month from each man for his board. The work in Bridgeport went dead and I went back home, and James Columbus went to Sequatchie City to look for work.

James Columbus found work in Sequatchie City for \$2.00 a day. He worked there for a short time when that work went dead. He came home and helped pa and brother John gather the crops. When the crops were all gathered they started to build our log house. Our third baby boy, Harley Nelson, was born January 24, 1891, near Shellmound, Tennessee.

The day Harley Nelson was a month old we moved in our new log house. We dug a well, built a crib, a cow stall, a wagon shed and a big barn. Pa had half of the barn to store his crop in and we had the other half. We had lots of peaches, apples, cherries and grapes in the yard. We bought us a team and wagon, then we started to farming. We hired a man to help us with the crops. One of our mules fell dead the day we got ready to start pulling corn. After that things started happening fast and furious. Our one cow went off after I milked her one night and died. The hogs took the cholera, and most of the chickens died with the limberneck. When the wild berries were ripe, I would pick and sell all the berries I could. I got 10 cents a gallon for the berries. We planted cotton and when we picked it in the fall, we would sit by the fire at night and pick the seeds out to get cotton for quilts and to spin thread to knit summer sox. I would also spin and weave cloth to make our clothes. That winter another baby boy, John Carl, was born January 14, 1893, near Shellmound, Tennessee.

One time I traded a side of hog meat for a lamb. I would shear the lamb, take the wool, card and spin it into thread and knit sox, mittons and caps. I also would weave the wool thread into cloth and make clothes for the family. Things went along about the same way, till we had five boys. Dillard Alton, was born October 20, 1894, near Shellmound, Tennessee.

In the year 1895, James Columbus took another notion to go to Texas and look for work. I told him to go on and I would be home with the five boys when he got back home from Texas. He sold most everything we had to get money to go to Texas on. When he left I had \$1.00 and a sick baby. The next day after he left for Texas I had to take the baby to town to see a doctor. The doctor gave me some medicine to give the baby and he got well.

James Columbus was gone to Texas six weeks before he came back home. He said he got beat out of what money he had when he started home, and came home flat broke. The rest of that year he would get work any where he could get a days work to do.

The next spring 1896, two neighbor boys went in with James Columbus and started a crop together. When they got the crop all planted they fell out. One of the boys wanted to sell his part of the crop to us and said he would furnish us a horse to work the crop with and sell his part of the crop for 200 bushels of corn in the fall. We bought Bill out. That year was a real dry year and when the crop was gathered and we gave Bill his 200 bushels of corn, we only had one bushel left for ourselves. An old friend who lived in Jasper, Tenn., heard about us not having anything much for the winter, so he had his renter haul some corn over to us and put it in our crib. I think it was 150 bushels. We got by that winter by my four oldest boys and I going to the field of neighbors and picking peas on the half. We would pick about two bushels a day. We would get 75 cents a bushel for our half of the peas. That is the way I bought shoes for the winter. We would pull weeds and feed our hogs to keep them till time to butcher them for the winter. We had a baby boy, Benjamin Bryan, born November 30 1896, near Shellmound, Tennessee.

Things went along about the same way till we had six boys, which we were very proud of. If I do say it, I think I had as good a bunch of little boys as anybody ever had. They were very healthy, good to mind me and to help work. I was just a kid with them. We would play games and run races. When there was work to be did, we worked together and I don't think the children think any the less of me for doing it.

In February 1897, there were two Mormon Elders who came through that part of the country, the first we had ever seen. Everybody was interested in hearing them preach at first, but after they had preached three times the people lost interest. The Elders went to visit in one man's home and was asked to leave. This man belonged to the Baptist Church. One Sunday at Sunday School, the Methodist Superintendent asked the Elders to leave the country after they had made a talk in the church. The Elders left, but told the Methodist Superintendent, that from that day on, he would go down and down. He surely did, he went dead broke and died before the summer was over.

The next year 1898, more and more Elders came through the country. Polly Turner, Grandpa and Grandma Parker, and Jales Columbus and I would keep them in our homes. The Mormon preachers were the first preachers grandpa Parker ever went to hear preach or would ask to his home. The Elders would come through about every month or two and stay at our house. My folks were Missionary Baptist and we all attended the Baptist Church near our home.

We had our first girl, Katie, born March 5, 1899, near Shellmound, Tennessee. In August our baby girl took sick and died September 24, 1899. The Elders were staying at Grandpa Parkers house, and when they heard about the death of Katie, they came over at once. The Elders preached the funeral and helped us all they could. They started to coming over more often after Katie died and would talk with us. The last of November 1899, James Columbus and I were baptized into the Latter-Day Saint (Mormon) Church. Then the fat was in the fire. All my folks turned against us. We had another baby boy, George Alma, born August 27, 1900, near Jasper, Tennessee. I had never had a sewing machine till George was a baby. I sold chickens and eggs to buy the machine. We finally bought another team and started to make another crop. That year was a good year for farming and we made a good crop.

After we joined the Mormon Church my folks made life so miserable for us that we gave up and moved away from our log house on pa and ma's farm. I never did get a deed to our house which we built on pa's farm. We moved across the Tennessee River from where pa's place was, and lived there for one year. People would say everything that could be said against us, and made life miserable for us there, so we moved again.

We moved to Yucca, Alabama. We moved by steamboat and hauled wagon loads of our things down to the Tennessee River, and was loaded on the boat by dark. We had our cow and a wagon load of hogs to move on the steamboat too. Another family moved on the same boat as we did. The boys and I went on the boat while James Columbus and a nephew, Charley Turner, went horseback. They got there in time to meet the boat about midnight, and drove the wagons and teams out to where we were to live. Three of the boys and I stayed in a new house that was being built in town, while James Columbus and the other four boys and Charlie went out to the house we had rented to live in. We got moved in the next day and all fixed up to live there and farm. We planted most of the land in cotton. We were to give one-fourth of the crop for rent. We planted the cotten but didn't get a good stand, so we replanted the cotton field in corn. The land was bottom land where the corn was planted. When the corn got big enough to have good roasting ear, there came a big cloud burst in a small town, Harriman, Tennessee, and about washed the town away. The water came down the rivers and creeks and washed all of our corn away but 18 rows which was on higher ground. As soon as the water went down and the ground was dry enough we planted the field in corn again. In August, we had more high water and lost our corn patch again. It was too late to plant another crop that year. We only had eighteen rows of corn to pay one-fourth rent on. I think we raised four bales of cotton. We only got five cents a pound for the cotton. Our horse died with brain fever, the hogs died with cholera, and some dogs in the neighborhood got some of our sheep.

We decided we would go to Oregon. We sold everything we had in the house

but our clothes. We sold the two tables, dresser, bedsteads, safe, and sewing machine. All we had left was a mule and wagon. It would take all we could get to go to Oregon, but we got all packed to go. A man James Columbus had worked for all summer was owing us quite a bit of money, so he went over to collect his money and told the man we were leaving for Oregon. The man said he would have the money for us when we got ready to leave. The man ran away and we never saw him again and never got the money. We didn't get to move to Oregon because we didn't have enough money to go on.

James Columbus put one of our boys on the mule, walked and led the mule to Bridgeport, Alabama. He sold the mule for one hundred dollars and put the boy on the train and sent him to Shellmound, Tenn., to stay with his grandmother Parker. A friend of our's got us a house, put in a stove, two bedsteads and four chairs, then we moved in. James Columbus got a job in Bridgeport, Alabama, and worked till he got some money for us to live on, then sent for the boys and I. I hired a man to load everything we had on a wagon and to take the six boys and I to the river to catch the boat to go to Bridgeport. We got there on a Sunday, and James Columbus was there to meet us with a wagon and team. We moved out to the house he had rented, but only lived there for a short time.

James Columbus got a job on a new railroad and had to be away from home from Sunday evening till Saturday night. He made \$2.00 a day while working on the railroad, but had to board himself. We paid \$5.00 for house rent, and paid \$1.50 for water. Four of our boys went to work at a basket factory in Bridgeport. Herschell only worked a few days and quit. He was only paid 15 cents a day. I think Harry got about 25 cents a day. He got fired because he threw a piece of a basket out the window and hit the boss in the face. The other two boys worked all week and got their pay on Saturday night. Their pay was about 40 cents for them both; about enough to buy a mess of fish for our breakfast. Harry then went up in Tennessee and got a job plowing for a man. He worked there for a short time and made 50 cents a day.

In August we had to move farther down in town. We got an eight room house and water for \$5.00 a month. We started the boys to school. I bought us a cow and we had milk to drink and I had some butter to sell. I got 25 cents a pound for the butter. We had to buy everything we ate when we lived in Bridgeport. The city Mayor lived in front of us and the Methodist Preacher lived by us. The Methodist Church was not far from our house.

In October grandpa Parker came down and stayed all night with us and when he left he took Bryan home with him to stay for awhile. The next Saturday morning after Bryan was there, grandpa Parker died. We all went up to Jasper, Tennessee for the funeral. We left Herschell in Jasper to stay with his grandma Parker. He stayed with her a year and helped with the farm work. She gave him 60 bushels of corn for his year's work. After school was out Harry started to learn moulding. He took such a cold, I made him stop working. It almost killed him. By this time the railroad had been finished and James Columbus had to look for another job. He started doing carpenter work and laying stone. He still had to be away from home when he worked. I kept the boys and they were good to mind me. They never went to town without asking me.

One day two Mormon Elders came down from Tennessee and stayed two days and two nights with us. They went down to the bridge one day and when they were coming back to the house they met the Methodist Preacher standing at his gate in his yard. The Elders spoke to him. He stood and watched them till they came in our house. The next week we had orders to leave. At that time the Elders were only allowed to come into town after their mail.

We then moved out to Rock Springs, which was about two and one-half miles from Bridgeport, Alabama. We made some good friends in Rock Springs. They attended the Campbellite Church. James Columbus was still working away from home. He had to leave his boarding house while eating his dinner, because the Mrs. found out he was a Mormon. He then walked about 40 miles through the mountains and went to Tracy City. He worked there till August and then came home.

We had twin girls, Fannie and Susie, born August 18, 1903, in Bridgeport, Alabama. Susie was stillborn and Fannie lived from August 18, 1903 to September 4, 1903.

In October 1903, James Columbus got some work in Bridgeport and we moved back to Bridgeport. I got sick and Herschell had to come home and do the work while I was sick and the other four boys went to school. Then Bryan took the jaundice and was no good for a long time. He got well and in January we moved again. We moved back to Tennessee and settled about one mile from Jasper, Tennessee. We got a seven room house with all the out buildings for \$5.00 a month. We left Harry working at the mines at Orem, Alabama. Later Harry came home and all the boys went to school till spring. In the spring three of the boys wanted to farm, so we mortgaged everything we had to buy a \$60.00 horse for the boys to farm with. James Columbus and Harry started working on a road near Jasper, Tennessee, with Harry as a teamster, and dad as a contractor to build culverts. We turned one room of the house over for a Conference Headquarters for the Mormon Elders. I boarded then and did their washing for 25 cents a day for each person. Sometimes I had from two to four Elders, and some of dad's hired men to cook for. We all got the small-pox and was quarantined for a month. We couldn't go out to get food and supplies, so the county brought us food and furnished doctors. Sometimes there would be as many as three doctors come out to see us. Some months dad would get work and make some money and other times he went behind.

The next year we bought another horse for the boys to farm with. The boys went back and forth seven miles to work. We made a very good crop that year and we bought a team of mules and a wagon. We had a one-horse wagon. After the crops were all taken care of dad and the boys took both teams and went to work with a road gang. Dad would get home about once a week. The last six weeks of his job he cleared \$750.00. It was the most he ever made on a job. After the road job ended, dad worked some on a big dam across the Tennessee River. He had to walk about seven or eight miles mornings and nights. Later he got a contract for quarrying rock for a railroad bridge. He worked there till October. When we had saved one thousand dollars, we decided to move to Idaho. In all the time we lived near Jasper, Tennessee and after we joined the Mormon Church, my folks never spoke to me. One brother did speak when he came to our sale when we

sold out to move to Idaho.

In October 1906, we bought five whole tickets and two half tickets which cost us \$40.05 each. We left Jasper, Tennessee and started to Blackfoot, Idaho. Harry was working in Kentucky when we left for Idaho but he met us in Bridgeport, Alabama, and stayed with us till the train left, then went back through Jasper, Tennessee and stayed one night with his grandmother Parker. He went back to Kentucky to work. We were five days on the train going to Blackfoot, Idaho. When we got to Blackfoot there had been a snow and wasn't gone by October 23, 1906. We couldn't rent a house when we arrived in Blackfoot, so we had to stay at the depot till dad found a house we could buy. We bought some second-hand stoves, chairs, a table, beds, and three mattresses. We couldn't get any coal for the stoves, so a man brought us a load of blocks and shavings from one of the mills. Our baggage hadn't come, so we had no covers. Five of our boys slept between two mattresses and never said one word about being crowded. Dad, George and I had our bed in the room where the stove was. We would make a fire and get the house warm enough to go to sleep, then we would let the fire go out.

After we got settled in Blackfoot, Idaho, dad found work at the sugar factory. Three of our boys found work by picking up spuds. Later a man came by and wanted dad to go to laying brick. He decidcd to work for this man and sent Herschell to work at the sugar factory.

Harry would always write us regularly. He left Kentucky on February 1, 1907, and went to Mobile, Alabama. He wrote me from Mobile saying not to write him for he was leaving the next day to go to South America. The next letter he wrote was from Argentina. Later he wrote from Buenas Aires, saying he was on his way to San Francisco. California. He arrived in San Francisco on December 24, 1907, and went to Arizona to work. In June 1908, he wrote me he was going to Los Angeles, California and join the Navy, if I was willing. I had a letter in Los Angeles waiting for him when he got there, telling him "NO" he couldn't join the Navy, so he didn't join the Navy.

After we bought our home in Blackfoot, Idaho, in October 1906, we all went to work at whatever and whenever they could. The younger boys mostly loafed. I said before they should loaf around towm, I would take them to the sand hills and have them dig holes and then fill them up again. We bought a twenty acre farm, a team and tools and four of the boys went to farming. It was hard going sometimes, but we never went naked, cold or hungry.

In 1912, Herschell got married. Then we took up a homestead and moved to it. Harry married next. Then John (Jack) and from there on down. Alton went to the war first, then Bryan, and soon we were alone. Blight struck our beet crop and we lost it. We were in debt, so we lost about everything we had and had to start anew. We left the Rockford Country and moved north east of Blackfoot, Idaho, in 1925. In 1927 we bought a home one mile north of Blackfoot. Then we did have a hard time. A crooked company had a mortgage on the place and it took about everything we could raise for eleven years before we could get a federal loan to pay off the mortgage from this company.

All in all life has not been so bad. We had seven boys and three baby girls. We lost our baby girls, but raised the boys, and I am not ashamed of any of them. They all have nice families and homes of their own.

We are now both nearing the end of our life. Dad had a stroke and is almost helpless in his 77th year. I will be 71 years old next April 15, 1939 (Saturday).

I don't know if anyone would care to read this, but it is just a sketch of my life written from March 17, 1930, and completed before April 15, 1939.

This Family History was written by:
Annie Louise (Lou) Belk Parker, Year 1939.

Note: Collected and typed in 1961 by Mollie Margaret Estes Nothershed, a great niece of Annie Louise Belk Parker. Scanned and converted to electronic text by David D. Brown, August 2008.