

# **“MY LIFE”**

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I came to live on this earth January 31, 1920. My parents, Cain and Zetta NORTON BOLIN, lived at Fallsville, Arkansas in Newton County. The place they lived was known as the Eastep Place. I think we were there for about two years then we moved down on the head of Big Buffalo River just under Fallsville. We lived near my uncle and aunt, Elias and Cora BOLING SOUTHERLAND. I now realize my parents were doing subsistence farming. My father would go to the coal mines in Johnson County and work during the winter and then he would go to Kansas to the wheat harvest in the summer. It was during one of these times when daddy was gone to the wheat harvest that I was seriously injured (primarily my back). It is really giving me a lot of pain and trouble now. There was no care available that I needed then. It has affected me most of my life.

We moved to Walnut when I was six years old and Doyle, my brother, was just a two-year old baby. We lived across the creek from Uncle Hiram and Aunt Mattie NORTON (Uncle Hiram was brother to my mother). When we first moved there Uncle Howard and Aunt Holly CARLTON lived there (Aunt Holly was sister to my mother). Their daughters, Wilma and Marie, were small and the only children they had then. Sometime that year the CARLTONs moved into the house with my Grandpa and Grandma NORTON, and Aunt Mattie and her children moved home. Uncle Hiram always worked at stave mills away from home. This was the time of getting close to the children of Uncle Hiram and Aunt Mattie. It has lasted for many, many years.

After two years we moved to the Beasley Place at the forks of Walnut Creek and Big Piney. This was good farming land and daddy, mama, and we kids worked hard at it. It was much nearer to school for Doyle and me. Sometimes we could come home for lunch. We lived here four years before moving back up Walnut Creek near Uncle Hiram and Aunt Mattie. Most of my schooling was obtained in that little one-room school. AS I look back, I am amazed we learned anything. There were usually about fifty students and all eight grades in this one small room. Lester Ramsey was the teacher most of the time. I remember that we had only one set of encyclopedias as a library. I think some of us could have done well if we'd had better facilities. My brother was a fast learner and did well despite the limited arrangement. I had one of his high school teachers when I went to Arkansas Tech and he told me Doyle could have been anything (doctor, lawyer, etc.) with his ability and intelligence. I sure appreciated his comments.

I finished the eighth grade at Walnut before we moved to Big Creek in March of 1933. Doyle and I went to school at Log Hall that summer. I was going to eighth grade again and that fall term of school began at Vendor and we went there that winter.

Orvin (Dock) NORTON pursued me soon after we moved to this area. Shortly after I was fourteen years old in January, I agreed to marry him (1934). We did not ask our parents but updated our license and slipped away. I was so disappointed about my education and never gave up the desire to finish high school and go to college.

We went to East Tennessee and stayed from March to December. Dock worked at the stave mill a while and then we moved out into the woods where the stave bolts were obtained and taken into the mill. We lived in a tent and Dock took care of the teams of

mules and got some extra money for that. I cooked and boarded the other team drivers and later for the FREEMAN Boys who cut the stove bolts. From Dock's work and mine, we were able to save about \$300.00 by the time we came home. We had to buy some furniture and put away \$150.00 that we used to pay on our property at Piercetown (1941) Gerald was born in 1939 while we still lived at Vendor near Grandpa and Grandma NORTON (H. C. and Martha Jane NORTON).

I was urged by a teacher to review the eighth grade and take the Teacher's Exam. Luckily, I passed and was given a teaching certificate. I also began taking college courses by correspondence and eventually took all allowed by this manner. In order to get my high school diploma I took correspondence courses from American School in Chicago. I finished this in nine months. My first teaching was at Vendor in a two-room school. I paid out our place at Piercetown from this work. After this first year at Vendor, I quit teaching to allow Dock to claim farming for his deferment. He would not have passed anyway for he had a rheumatic heart. We did not know this until much later. He eventually had to have heart surgery because of the malady.

In 1955, I went to my first summer school at Arkansas Tech with some other teachers. I made it Ok despite my limited background. This continued from year to year with some night courses until I saw there was an end in sight. Then, I wanted so much to get that degree that nothing could stop me. So, in 1967 (two years after my son, Gerald) I received my B. S. in Elementary Education. I was so happy I hugged my diploma like a baby. I worked 8½ years for the U.S. Postal Service as Piercetown Postmaster, 8½ years for the State of Arkansas as Director of Welfare Department in Newton County, and lastly a return to teaching where I finished nineteen years in the area. I had to take early retirement because of my health. So, I have four areas of retirement income; Social Security, State of Arkansas, Civil Service, and Teacher's retirement. It is plenty for me to live on and I "Thank God" for every check I get. I do honor my Creator with my substance.

In conclusion, as I look back at my early years we lived a very primitive life compared to what we enjoy now. There was no electricity, no running water, no telephones, no radios nor TV's, and very few automobiles. Maybe we would see an airplane fly over once or twice a year. Our method of transportation was walking or horseback. Trains ran in the urban areas but we never saw them.

I surely appreciate the modern conveniences of all the above-mentioned plus the good roads we now have. An area has come of which I am unfamiliar. This is computers. I think I will leave this learning for the younger people. It has made work much easier for many people and I am happy for them.

My philosophy is to be happy to see someone do well, never jealous, live every day as if it were your last, and treat everyone as you would like to be treated. This has served me well and I plan to continue until.....