

"MY REMEMBRANCES"

by

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Great-grandma Sarah Ann West (called Nan) was born on May 15, 1833 and died Jan. 22, 1928. She is buried at Amis Chapel Baptist Church. I always thought that she lived to be 97, but records show that she was born in 1833 which would have made her 95. This must be correct because it has been said by some of the family that she was born the year of the "Falling Stars."

Some time ago I looked under "meteor" in the World Book Encyclopedia and found that the most brilliant meteoric shower ever on record took place on November 13, 1833. A little more explanation...A meteor is one of the metallic or stray pieces of matter that falls to earth from out of space. Once in the earth's atmosphere they move very fast. The friction of the air makes them so very hot that they glow. That is why we see them fall from their places in the heavens. Before meteors enter the earth's atmosphere they are invisible fragments of solid matter traveling in orbit around the sun. When the earth moves nearest to the sun sometimes it meets a swarm of meteors and the sky seems filled with a shower of sparkle. This is what happened in 1833. That was over 150 years ago when Great-grandma Nan was born and the people at that time did not know as much about things in space as we do now. Back in 1833 folks thought the world was coming to an end.

Great-grandma Nan's parents were William Broomfield West and Mary Locke West (called Polly). Her sisters and brother were as follows in order: 1. Sarah Ann (Nan), 2. Liza Jane (Jennie), 3. Elizabeth Michael, 4. Rebecca Elbeth, 5. Mary Francis, 6. Martha Damaris (From Acts 17:34), and 7. James William (Bill West). They were raised at what is now called the Tom Pittard place between Amis Chapel Church and the Virginia line.

When Sarah Ann was 12 years old, which was in 1845, her family went by covered wagon to Economy, Indiana. Her father's brother, Jimmy West and his family had already gone from Granville County and were living there. Jimmy married Retta Locke, sister to Mary Locke. They had a brother named William Locke who lived in Indiana. Retta's husband, Jimmy West died from fever out there. So William Broomfield decided to take his family and go out and stay for a while and help out after his brother had died. But they didn't like it at all there. It was nothing like they expected. They went in the fall of 1845 and came back in the spring of 1846. They said the birds were building nests as they came back. They got home in time to raise a corn crop and vegetable garden.

I remember some interesting little details about that trip which were told to me when I was a little girl visiting at my grandparent's house where Great-grandma Nan lived there also. She said they camped along the way, did their washing, sewing, patching, etc. They had left a thimble, needle and some things on a stump on their trip out there. They camped at the same place coming back and found the things left on the stump. She also told of crossing the same creek 7½ times. I asked,

"How did you cross a creek a half time?" She answered in her slow way, "Well, we crossed over 7 times and the last time the road went into the creek and came out on the same side." They lost one of their horses on the trip. Great-grandma Nan and her sister Jennie had charge of the cow which they had taken along. (Madeline Mulchi Pittard told me last summer that she has a large glass pitcher that went to Indiana on that trip and made it back still in one piece which her mother had handed down to her.)

Great-grandma⁵⁰⁸ Sarah Ann West married Stephen Spencer West in Granville County on November 19, 1860. (Marriage Bond No. 6926 in Granville Co. Courthouse, Oxford, N.C. It says "in the 85th year of our American Independence, A.D. 1860.) Stephen and Sarah were distant cousins. They had one child, my grandfather, George Spencer West.⁵⁴⁴

On Feb. 28, 1862 Great-grandpa Stephen joined up for duty in the Civil War under Captain G.T. Baskerville. He was with the 23rd Regiment of Infantry Troops, Granville County. He was wounded in battle around Petersburg and Richmond, Virginia. He was treated in Richmond, and then traveled home when he was able. He returned to duty after only two months at home, and was killed at the "Battle of the Wilderness" at Chancellorsville, Virginia shortly after. This particular battle lasted only two days-May 2 & 3, 1863. We have never been able to find his grave, although several family members have searched for it. I have records from the Archives in Washington, D.C. about his death - date and location.

Several years after Great-grandpa Stephen was killed, his parents-James Peter West and Nancy Currin West moved with their family to Morgantown, Kentucky in Butler County in 1867. They are buried there in Cook's Cemetery. These were Grandpa George West's grandparents on his father's side. Our cousin, Anne West Kline, who lives in Terre Haute, Indiana has been to the cemetery.

Grandpa George grew up on the William West farm with his mother and several of her sisters who were not married. He was their little "plow-boy." At the age of 23 he married my grandmother - Mollie Little John Kinton, age 17 on Oct. 28, 1885 by Rev. R.I. Devin, Baptist minister. (Witnesses were G.W. Parker and W.L. Burwell; Register of Deeds was T.M. Washington.)

Grandma Mollie L. Kinton was the daughter of Little John Kinton and Lucy Chandler Kinton of Kinton Forks near Oxford, N.C. Little John Kinton was born Dec. 22, 1826, died Dec. 12, 1903. Lucy was born on Dec. 14, 1843, died Jan. 26, 1925. Little John was 17 years older than his wife, Lucy. It was at their home place at Kinton Fork that we held the family reunions when I was a small child. It was discontinued at the time of the polio epidemic in the country.

My Grandma Mollie and Grandpa George lived not far from her parents at Kinton Fork during the first years of their marriage at a place called the "Old Cooper Place." The house was built during slavery time. (Many of you may have heard the varicus folklore tales about the place being haunted. Some examples were: About a door that wouldn't stay shut until it was taken off the hinges and turned around opening from the opposite side; ...about hearing the spinning wheel going on in the night down in the basement with no one near it; and also of sounds of dishes breaking when all was well. I went to the old home a couple of times before

it was torn down and I saw the door with the evidence of where it had been turned around. Aunt Pearl and my mother, Beatrice West were born there. Then Grandpa George bought land over here at the old home place. He cut the virgin timber and built a home. That was where the other children were born: Uncle Sam, Aunt Kate, Uncle Steven, Aunt Mattie Leigh, and Uncle Tom.

Great-grandma Nan lived with them there for many years. I liked to go there and visit. I didn't really grasp the importance of my visits then or I would have tried to learn and remember a lot more of my family history.

From the time I was 10 or 12 years old and growing up in my early teens, I spent a lot of time with Grandma Mollie. She was a good, kind, and gentle woman with so much patience and understanding. She loved to go to church and wanted to see all of her folks there, too. She sat up at the front in our old church and sang with the ladies as long as she was able to do so. There is one thing that especially stands out in my mind about Grandma Mollie. When I was 12 years old we had a week of revival meetings in July at Amis Chapel Church. Rev. J.U. Teague was the pastor. Grandmama had talked to me about the Lord and when the altar call was given I wanted to go and give my heart to Jesus. My heart was beating very fast, but my feet just wouldn't move. Grandma looked over at me, got up, came over and spoke a few words of encouragement to me. That gave me the courage to step out and make my decision public. A few Sundays later we had the baptizing. I remember standing afterwards under the big oak tree that used to be near the old church door; Grandma came and put her arms around me and said, "God bless you." That meant so much to me, and always will.

Grandma Mollie was a licensed midwife and delivered many children in the community and also across the Virginia line. She was licensed in both Granville Co., N.C. and Mecklenburg Co., Va. She was a good doctor for all kinds of ailments, especially pneumonia, flu, colic, croup, etc. Whatever the neighbors had, they sent for "Mrs. West." I had pneumonia one time and Grandmama kept me at her house a whole month until I got well. Her grandmother, Martha Ann Chandler, lived with Lucy and Little John Kinton in her elder days. Martha Ann was a full-fledged doctor and had gone to medical school in Virginia. It was said that when Grandma Mollie was a young girl and was missing for a while, you would find her upstairs studying her grandma's medical books. So that's where she learned a lot about nursing and medicine. After Grandmama's children were grown and married, she did a lot of doctoring. That is the time I remember the most about it. Grandma Mollie drove a buggy with a black horse named Dan. She would come by our house on the way to see some one sick and ask Mama if I could go and take care of her folks while she was away. I truly enjoyed those visits. Sometimes it was necessary for me to do many things for her such as: cook, milk the cow, churn the butter, feed the chickens...those kind of things. We didn't have electric lights in the rural sections then, just oil lamps. Everyone went to bed early. It was said that Grandpa George went to bed with the chickens (which was before dark), and got up so early he had to sit at the field and wait for it to get light enough to work.

At the time that John D. Mulchi was born, Grandma went and stayed with Aunt Pearl two weeks and I kept house for Grandma. One night there was a bad storm. The wind blew so hard you could hear those large oak trees creaking in the wind and waving to and fro. I was in one bedroom

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upstairs and Great-grandma Nan was in the other room across the hall from me. She was snoring real hard. I heard a big noise downstairs. I was too scared to get up. Evidently Grandpa was not awake, so I just lay there and finally went back to sleep. Very early the next morning I tip-toed down the stairs. The parlor door was partly open. I looked in and found that a large picture hanging on the wall had fell right on top of Grandma's big, pretty lamp and had broken the flowered globe in several pieces. That was the noise I had heard in the night.

There was a time that Great-grandma Nan stayed upstairs in her room for seven years without coming down. I really don't know why. She didn't seem sick. She just sat in her rocker beside the fire and she slept a lot, as I recall. I remember taking water up to her many, many times in a little white pitcher with pink roses on it. One time when I went up to see her I smelled something burning. She was sitting in her rocker beside the fireplace. A spark had popped out onto her long, black worsted skirt and there was a ring of fire but no blaze, and I quickly smothered it out. I think that Grandma Nan must have believed she was just old and "felt so unnecessary." She didn't know then that she had a lot more years to go! One time when Grandma Mollie had to be away, Grandma Nan just came back downstairs and started doing things again as before. I believe she stayed downstairs the rest of her life. I was there when she passed away on January 22, 1928. Her bed was in my Grandmother's bedroom where she could be seen after day and night. She wasn't real "sick" even then. I think at 95 her body was just tired and gave out. I was standing by her bed and she just went to sleep so peacefully. Her breath got shorter and shorter, then one little puff and she was gone. I remember thinking, "to go this easy wouldn't be so bad."

I would like to tell the story that Grandpa George told me one time. He and his father-in-law, Little John Kinton, took a trip to the coast of N.C. on a wagon to get a load of fish. They went to a little place near Morehead City. I think the fish were herring that were salted down in barrels of brine. He said they ate fish, sold fish, and traded fish for other things to eat and got back home with two barrels - one for each family. They went through part of the Dismal Swamp on the return trip. At night they had to keep a fire going to keep the wild animals away. Some of them came so close that their eyes could be seen shining in the dark. One night they were trying to get a little sleep, when the horses, which were tied to the wagon wheels, got so restless that they decided to go ahead and hook up the horses and continue the trip in the middle of the night. One day during the trip they saw a man walking and gave him a ride. The man said he had never had been more than 12 miles from home. He asked how far they had to go. When they told him he said, "Do you think you will ever get back home?" I believe it took three weeks for the round trip.

Several of Grandma and Grandpa's grandchildren were born at their house: Maybelle (Aunt Kate and Uncle Robbie Hite's oldest child), also Jim West and Lois (the two oldest of Tom's children.) Tom went to work at the Chesapeake Bay in 1929. After he married Bessie Hoover in Baltimore, he came home and farmed a while. But the water and the ship was calling him, so he went back and stayed.

After Uncle John Mulchi died, Aunt Pearl and her children came to Grandma's. Aunt Pearl worked doing practical nursing. Hesley Mulchi

joined the army. Melvin went to work for Chandler Road Construction, but was later killed in an accident on the job at Scottsville, Va. John D. went to work for the Civil Service. Madeline lived at Grandma's until she and Leroy Pittard married: Madeline and I were together a lot during that time, both at Grandma's and at my home.

I have lots of memories at my grandparents' home: the wood cuttings in the spring, and the corn shuckings in the fall when neighbors would share a days work with each other. The women would cook up a big meal to feed all the folks. Daddy would help the men and Mama helped Grandma cook. In the fall at the corn shucking time, I would make a large flower arrangement from the yellow chrysanthemums that were blooming in the front yard. The stems were so long the flowers were lying on the ground before I cut them. I can still remember how they smelled when they were cut.

Our Grandpa George West lived to be 94 years old. He was born Feb. 25, 1862, and died on June 21, 1956. Grandma Mollie L. Kinton was born on May 21, 1866 and was 77 years old when she died on April 16, 1943. These were two special people in my life that I will always remember and love. They were both members of Amis Chapel Baptist Church and were buried there.

These are just a few of the things I remember about my grandparents and the "old place." I suppose it would take a book to write them all down. I am real happy to be here at this reunion today and hope you have enjoyed me sharing these memories with you.

God bless you,

Alma Currie Lewis

Grand-daughter