

Ulmer Lee(Birdie) Wood Family

By Mary Jane Vandiviere, Oct. 1992

Birdies parents were: George Washington Wood and Jessie Lou Cauble. They were parents of 16 children, most of whom I knew personally.

1-M. Willy Ray, Died as baby.

2- F. Verona Lee, Died at age 18

3-David Napoleon Wood, Md. 1- Icie Holder.

4-Lou Ella Wood Md. Le Roy Rash.

5-Eva Ray Md. Frank Vosburg. No children.

6-Ethel Arena Md. Andrew Frank Caldwell.

7- Netie Deller Md. Christopher Roberts.

8- Archie Dow Wood, Md. 1-Jessie Markley 2- Mary Beth

9- Sarah Ann(Sallie) Md.1 James Coleman Crow 2-Rufus Bedford Wright.

10- Georgia Isabella Md. 1

(2) Edward Lemon, 3- Tony Hardin.

11-Martha Elizabeth Md.Clyde Garwood (Lizzie)

12- Ulmer Lee (Birdie) Md. 1, William Adolph Switzer

(2) Charles Jackson Loyd.

13- Dovie Dimaries Died as a baby.

14-Johnie De Alvie Md. 1 Wayne Wilson,2, Ralph Windsor.

15-Joseph Coleman Died as a baby.

16- Foy Culberson Wood, Md. Mamie Hestor.

I knew 11 of the family, plus Birdies Father. I will write some of the things I know about them, so my family will know they had a special family on their Grandmother Loyds side. and I will write what little I know about the Switzers, which is not too much as they lived on Ok. I only met a few of them, but I know the ones who live in Albuquerque and Los Lunas and they are wonderful people and good people.

I will start out with Uncle Pole, as everyone called him. I met him shortly after Bill and I married at the Charlie Loyd Ranch. His wife had died and he had just remarried and seemed very happy with his new wife. We just spent one night there but I really liked him and knew he was a fine man.

He raised a large family , but I only met two of his daughters when we lived in Lovington one winter. I can't remember their names however, but they were nice ladies. They were very radical over their protestant Pentecostal Church and they invited Birdie and me to attend a Revival with them. We did! I had never been to another Church, and was most anxious to find out about it especially as Bill and Charlie had plenty to say aabout it.

It was a very interesting experience to say the least. It was quite a treat to me to witness all the shouting, hand-clapping and singing going on and to see all of them either crawling or running to the Pulpit to confess they were sinners! Birdie and I were the only two left in the room who still sat on the bench, so we must have been in a bad way.

There was a woman visiting preacher there, who preached until she got completely carried away, then she grabbed a Tamborine and kept hopping up on a chair and then jumping down with her huge bosom flopping up and down, and she kept yelling " It's raining, it's raining blessings from Heaven.! What a show. And somehow I couldn't help getting into all that emotion! When we left, just to be polite I shook hands with their regular preacher and siad I had enjoyed the Service." Oh, Sister," he said, " You haven't seen anything yet! We're just getting started!" Well, they had to start without me!

Birdie told me later on that the Preacher and the visiting Preacher Lady left town together after the Revival, taking all the money that was donated and leaving his wife and several small children. Birdie was disgusted and never returned. Her neices were so embarrassed that we didn't see hide or hair of them again.

Aunt Ethel was special to me as she was so wonderful with her five grandchildren and good to me and Billy who was just a baby in 1941 and 42. We lived in a small apartment a few blocks from her in Lovington and she lived in a small house on the back of Aunt Eva's place and her daughter Jessie Lou and kids lived with her. They were so crowded and there was never enough money to go around, but Ethel was so patient and kind to all of them. Jessie divorced her husband, Frank Osborn, because he would not work and support them. So she worked for \$1,00 a day doing housework, washing on a rub board and ironing, and was worn out by the days end. Finally she got acquainted with Mr Eaves, an older man who owned a cattle ranch, had oil interests, a nice Restaurant with a Bar and he hired Jessie to work for him as a Hostess(I think). I never knew for sure. Anyway she earned good money and took good care of her kids and her mother. Naturally some of the aunts had a fit, but Birdie always said, " If they don't like it, they can support them." Soon the talk died down. Billy Frank was the eldest and died young, then the twins, Martha Ann and Mary Jane, and Eva Dow.

Now, Aunt Georgia was quite a character when I met her and always had been Birdie told me. She got married young and had 7 kids. When her husband died, she did not notify her family of her plans, but adopted them all out! It broke her parents hearts, any of the family would have taken them and raised them. Next she married again and had 4 more children and when their father died, Georgia adopted them out to a family named Lemon and they grew up in the Mesa, Phoenix area, never knowing any of their relatives.

During the war in 1942, Bill worked for Douglas Aircraft in Santa Monica, Ca. where we met two of her daughters, an older one, Jaunita and Ruth the next to the youngest. They had finally located their mother and visited her, but they were never close. At that time they felt abandoned and isolated from the family. After Birdie and Charlie moved to Deming, and while we were living in Tularosa, N.M. Georgia and her husband Tony Hardin, came to visit them. We met them in the mountains above Cloudcroft for a weekend campout, so that is where I met Aunt Georgia.

She was a high strung, radical lady, gray haired and old, all shrunk up and talked constantly. Her husband was much younger than she was and he treated her like a Queen! We simply could not understand him! He was a nice man. Now Birdie could hardly be decent to her sister and I couldn't blame her. She felt like Georgia shouldn't have adopted out her 11 children and was disgusted with the life she'd led and she had joined the Jehovah Witness Church and all she could do was preach to everybody. So Birdie didn't give her much chance to talk to her, so while the rest of them played cards and cooked, I would talk to Georgia as I wanted to know about her church and she let me explain about mine, which is the L.D.S. the folks would never let me talk about it, they were so afraid they might get converted, and always put me off. She was interesting to talk to and told me about her life in the San Fernando Valley, Cal. but I thought it was strange that she never mentioned her children, only to say she couldn't take care of them and did what she thought was best for them. She passed away shortly after that visit.

Now Aunt Della Roberts was an amazing woman! The whole family called her Deller and I got a kick out of that. She married an older man, Mr Roberts, who had a daughter Birdies age, and they were real pals. Birdie spent several summers with them on the ranch in Texas east of Portales, N.M. Birdie rode on several cattle drives with Mr Roberts and he always treated her like a Lady. She wore a split skirt and rode a side saddle and said she had the time of her life with the cowboys. She loved that kind of life because she got tired of working on her fathers cotton farm, picking cotton, hoeing and doing a mans work. Mr Roberts bro^ught Della and children by wagon to Granbury, Hood County, Texas to visit her folks and when they went back north to their ranch, they took Birdie along to help Della, as she was expecting a baby any minute. Sure enough they barely made it to the Wagon Yard in Portales when the baby Keaton was born. Birdie cared for her sister, the new baby and the toddlers, then they treveled on to the ranch when the baby was three days old.

Birdie stayed awhile with them, and when she was ready to return home, Mr Roberts took her to the store and bought her a long skirt and had a woman teach her to put up her hair in a Pompadour, which was stylish in 1906. She said she felt like a Queen! What a chore it must have been to put up her knee length black hair. Birdie always spoke highly of Mr Roberts and Della and she loved them both dearly. He died and left Della with 7 children. I knew six of her children, all but Joe who lived in Calif.

- 1-Callie Roberts
- 2- Opal Priest
- 3-Keaton Roberts
- 4-Tilene Roberts Ward.
- 5-Jack Roberts
- 6-George Clay Roberts.
- 7- Joe Roberts.

All of the children died from heart attacks but Tilene, and she died in childbirth and left a baby boy, John Ward.

Aunt Della moved to Ft. Bayard, New Mexico when her husband died and worked at the Hospital and Callie and Opal worked there also. Bill and I visited them several times and I loved them all as they were such a kind, loving family and sweet to us. Bill told me that both he and Paul had spent time with Aunt Della when they left home. They worked at the Dairy milking cows, but they had the wander lust so both of them quit and went on their separate ways.

Della was a beautiful woman and I thought she was the prettiest one in the family. She had dark hair just turning gray and big expressive eyes and she was a small woman, short but shapely and she had the most beautiful white skin I ever saw on a woman her age. It was soft and perfect. I asked her what she had used all her life to have skin like that and her answer floored me. " I've never used any cream in my life, all I ever did, was wipe my face off with every diaper I ever changed and that is plenty." I couldn't believe it, but it worked!

Tilene, the youngest girl, had her mothers complexion and the most beautiful, perfect face I ever saw in my life and her niece, Opals daughter, had the same face and my sister in law Wanda Lou, has about the same face. I can't describe it, but Tilene was absolutely beautiful! This was about 1935 when I met them. I am not sure about the year but in the 1930's. Tilene owned a Beauty Shop in Silver City, and she and John waited 7 years to have a baby so they would have the money to pay for things, and then she had to die. I never found out what happened to cause her death.

We knew Keaton Roberts and his wife Ruth Love, from Lovington, and visited them often in Alamogordo, where she worked in the County Court House and he was a Deputy Sheriff. We lived in Tularosa at the time. They had one son. Keaton came home one day feeling tired out and went to bed. The following morning he went to the Doctor who sent him home to bed to rest. He died that morning, by himself. Heart trouble, and we simply could not believe it! We attended his funeral and I thought he looked like he was asleep and I kept thinking he would wake up and speak to us!

Jack Roberts spent a summer on Uncle Tom Summers ranch and he was a good worker. George Clay was there for awhile also, but he was really too young to do much. Both boys were well liked, and that is where I met them. Jack died as a young man, from the same heart trouble the rest died from.

We knew George Clay and his wife Nada and boys when we lived in Silver City and later when we lived in Tyrone. They were so happy together and he was so proud of her. She was a trick rider and performed for the Rodeos all over the country with her family. She was a beautiful woman. He too, died in his thirties. Again, we could hardly believe it!

Aunt Sallie Wood Crow Wright was a darling. In 1935 or around there, We were working for Bert Mc Carrell out from Chamvbers Ariz. and had a large rock house. Bills folks and Uncle Tom and Aunt Minnie and Nell and Doc cam for Thanks-giving and to celebrate Charley and Birdies Wedding Anni-versary, After the big dinner, the folks were getting ready to drive back to their ranches and Birdie mentioned that she had received a letter from Sallie wanting her to come and see her in Albuquerque, N.M. She was dying with Cancer and could not live too long, Bill told her we would take them in our car as it was only less than 200 miles and we had never been there. What a treat for me! So that was when I met Aunt Sallie and her husband Mr Wright. Several of their children lived there and we had the best time! Went night-clubing and danced and drove to Madrid to see the Christmas lights and what a beautiful sight! We had a lovely visit. Aunt Sallie had 3 children by Mr Crow, Opal, J. C, and Birdie Lee.

By Mr Wright she had Henry (Hay Tay) and Tip, two sons. They were all lovely people and we became close friends later on when we moved to New Mexico. I was always grate-ful that we went to see her as she died a few months later and only weighed 35 pounds at her death. Mr Wright died a few years later with cancer also, they couldn't treat it at all in the thirties.

Aunt Eva Vosburg, one of Birdie's oldest sisters, I knew very well and we loved her so much. She had a nice home in Lovington and as her husband had been dead for years, she lived alone. She had a good income, oil royalties and things so she was good about helping her family. She loved Bill but Dow's son, Woodrow, was her favorite. I couldn't understand why as he was an alcoholic, and never worked so his wife worked and supported him and their 2 children, a boy and a girl. I never really cared for him as he was drunk most of the time. The Officers, out of respect for his father, would pick him up and keep him in jail until he would sober up, then take him home and then he would start over again. Ruth was a good woman, a Catholic and did not believe in divorce I guess, but she never lost her temper with him and was very patient and loving with her family. She died before he did, probably from heart-break. Anyway Aunt Eva left her home and money and royalties to Woodrow and he squandered it off, drank it up, the family said and he didn't live long after that.

Aunt Lizzie and ~~Clyde~~ Garwood lived all their married life in Amarillo, Texas and raised a nice family. As each of them belonged to a different church, they picked a church out and joined and raised their kids in the Church and they did a marvelous job. ~~Clyde~~ was dead when I met her and she missed him and talked about him a lot. Her children were good to her and loved her so much. She looked a lot like Della but not as pretty. She loved to talk! Her daughter Gwendolyn and Bob brought her to see Birdie a lot and Gwen was the youngest child who had no children, so she spoiled her mom. I knew all her children, all but Floyd. George and his wife came to visit us when we lived at Blaines Lake, N.M. and were very nice people. He is a Preacher in Ca. now. I met Lahoma and liked her too. She was also a Preacher in their church, and I met Modean, who was married to a rich Jew in Ca. he was old and she said the Dr. told her to keep him off liquor or he would die, and she said, I am keeping him well supplied, and laughed. She inherited his wealth when he died.

We knew Thelma and Lem Poling well and thought a lot of them. In fact she was my favorite of Lizzies kids. She was large and jolly and thoughtful and good to us. We spent a weekend with them in Portales once and took my neice ^{JOAN} and her husband ^{HANS} and two kids with us and she treated them just like family. She was an excellent cook and just a really special lady. We met some of their children but the one we liked best was Bobby and his wife Gerda and little girls. We lived in the same trailer court in Albuquerque one time and we got really close. They belonged to a Pentecostal church and their daughter is now a preacher. He played guitar and the whole family sang. They came down to Los Lunas to Linda and Clints wedding, and played and sang for us. They were not only relatives but special friends. When Bob and I were married, Bobby had a heart attack and died in 5 days. We went to his funeral at their church and I never heard such beautiful singing in my life, or attended a more beautiful funeral. The family had a floral arrangement in the shape of a guitar, a large beautiful thing of art, and it impressed me. I have missed them.

Well, when Mary Lee and Dale got married, Aunt Lizzie came on the bus to the wedding and she was delightful. Our girls got such a bang out of her wearing red, ruffly slips and fancy clothes and jewelry but no makeup! Lots of fancy hats she insisted Birdie wear one, but Birdie was never dressy in her life. She was beautiful without fancy clothes.

Now Uncle Dow was a favorite of mine, he was adored by all the family. He was a cattle inspector for years in Lea County where he had his cattle ranch. He never took a drink in his life and was respected by everyone. He was always so good and kind to his family, especially to Birdie and she loved him so very much. They went through so much together, when her first husband died. He went to Ok. and moved her and the children to Lovington to be close to her parents. He was always so good to her. Jessie, his first wife was an alcoholic and his son woodrow grew up to be one and the girl was a mess too. After they were grown he finally got a divorce and later married Mary Beth, a

widow with a little girl, Boots. She was a joy to be with and so good to Dow and loved him with all her heart and they were so happy and raised Boots. He deserved some happiness. She decorated his nice ranch house and kept it so nice and treated all his family nice, especially his children. After Boots got married, she lost a baby at birth and we drove over from Carlsbad to the funeral, but Bill wouldn't let me go as I was about to have Roy, so I stayed home at Dows and about made myself sick sampling all the good food their friends brought in! My memories Of Uncle Dow and his family are very precious to me. In fact all my memories are and that is why I am writing some of them down for my children to read someday, so they will know about their family on their fathers side. They were special people and they should be proud of them.

Aunt Johnnie Wood married a man named Wilson and had a son. She divorced him and later married Ralph Winsor. Now, those Winsor men must have had something special as Aunt Ethels daughter Katie Wynema married Ralphs brother, Erastus, or Rasty as we called him, and Kizzie (Kay) married Jesse Winsor. There was one other brother, Dotch and what a mess he was. Slow as the 7 year itch, in speech and movement and he used to drive me crazy when he talked. He used to bring his mother over to Uncle Tom and Aunt Minnies to visit and she was a little old white haired woman who didn't talk much. The Winsor ranch was over at Box Lake, 17 miles southwest of Quemado, N.M. and I hated it when we lived and worked there for Bert and Dotch. It really was in a Box Lake. When I met them they lived on their cattle ranch about 12 miles north of Holbrook, Az. She was a good sweet woman but couldn't hold a candle to Birdie. I guess I am partial, well, I know I am! She liked to tell tales and keep people in hot water, but Birdie had warned me so I didn't pay much attention to the things she told me. They had Cecil Wilson, Perry, who died as a child, Mutt, Pat and Bonnie Jean. I liked them all. The two boys died as young men, they were drinkers.. Later on they sold their ranch and moved to Portales, N.M. then sold that place and moved to Aspermont, Texas and died there. Bonnie Jean and family live there now. I loved them all.

Uncle Cub Wood married and had 2 children. I met one son In Hobbs and his family and he ~~had~~ a nice family. I think Cub drank a lot. I only saw him one time when we were living in Bingham, N.M. Bill was working with a floating unit for the state on construction and we lived in a railroad car there. Cub and a friend came by to see us. He was nice but ^{NOT} like Uncle Dow! The main thing I remember is, I thought sure he was going to lose his pants! You could see his crack! He embarrassed me!

Birdie said her father was a wanderer, never satisfied with what he had but always looking for something better! He had a nice farm in Granbury, Hood, County Texas, and most of the children were born there. They raised cotton and pecans and worked hard. He would take a notion to move to Leedy, Roger Mills Co. Ok, every so often, so they would load the wagon and take off. Her mother got tired of moving, but she always went with him. They would just get settled there, and then move back to Texas. Finally later on, they moved to Lovington, N.M. and are buried there. It was while they were living in Ok. that Birdie met her husband, William Adolph Switzer. They married and lived near Leedy until he died in Nov, 1910. His parents moved here from Germany and some of the older sons were born in Germany but Bill was born in America.

The whole family belonged to the Methodist church and attended every Sunday, rain or shine, all that is, but the mother, She stayed home to cook dinner for her large family and the Preacher, who Birdie said could eat more fried chicken than anyone she ever saw in her life! As the children always had to wait to eat when the adults finished, there was not too much choice chicken left so Birdie said she was grown before she realized there was other parts to the chicken besides the tail that went over the fence last!

Her father was dead set against dancing so they were not allowed to dance, but he did approve of the Swing Parties they held at the Church. Birdie said they would sing and swing just like Square dancing without the good fiddling music and it was a lot of fun.

Somehow Birdie learned to dance after she was married and her father couldn't prevent her from dancing, because she loved to dance and was very graceful. She especially loved to waltz as well as Square dance. She used to tell me, " Mary, when I die and they bury me, have a Fiddler play a waltz over my grave and if I don't come out dancing, you will know I am dead!"

Birdie's grantmother Cauble was an old Lady who lived with them several years and she was blind. There was not much she could do but knit so she knitted socks for all the family. She was so good at it that she could tell instantly if she missed a stitch, so the children took delight in slipping up behind her and messing up her work. When she would discover it, she would yell at them and they would all end up laughing. Birdie dearly loved the old lady.

Before Bill and I married, one summer my sister Ruth and I spent some time with Uncle Tom and Aunt Minnie on the ranch, and Mrs Cosby invited them and the Loyds to Sunday dinner. Of course we went along and the Loys were there. Birdies sister Lizzie and Clyde had brought Birdies Father out to spend some time with them so he was there for dinner also. He was old and stooped and had beautiful white hair and was so sweet that we fell in love with him and called him Grand-Daddy. We spent the afternoon under a cedar tree with him while he whittled us each a puzzle. They were so neat and I kept mine for years. He loved telling us stories about his life and I loved that. He was a real character!

He died a couple years after that and Ada Vance drove Birdie to Lovington to the funeral and I was always so happy she got to go as she missed her mothers funeral.