

Wilderness House Literary Review 16/1

Connie Bedgood
WAYNE LINDSEY

Uncle Wayne was about six feet tall with broad shoulders and a wonderful laugh. He always wore Khaki pants and shirt with a brown felt broad brimmed hat. Aunt Bea was his wife and a wonderful cook. Uncle Wayne was an expert shot with a rifle and fine fisherman. There was not much meat due to World War II. We had stewed squirrel, fried squirrel and baked squirrel and yummy fried fish when I was there for a visit which was for a couple of weeks and play with their kids. Wayrene was the oldest child then G. W. was next with Noah Glen the younger brother.

My mother was in Women's Air Core and Daddy was in the Navy during World War II so my brother Bobby and I stayed with her mother, Laura Lindsey in Pottsboro, Texas which was not far from Gordonville where Uncle Wayne and group farmed.

Many years ago I checked with Wayrene to see how she felt about my visits and to ask if some of the things I remembered were true. She related to me that they loved my visit because Uncle Wayne did not make them work -- as much. They still had to haul water, take out trash and wash and dry the dishes but those were easy chores compared to working in the fields.

The house had no electricity and of course, the outhouse was in the cow pasture. Every time Wayrene accompanied me she laughed because I was afraid of cows. I was city girl from San Francisco and had never been close to an animal that large.

When we walked back to the house, I asked why the bedrooms were on one side of the house and the kitchen and living room on the other side of the house. She replied, it is cooler that way. In between the bedrooms and rest of the house was a wide walkway. The wind whistled thru that area day and night. That part was cooler for sure. Even in the summer we slept part of the night under quilts.

One night it rained and sound of rain on a tin roof was wonderful. It even put Noah Glen and G.W. to sleep. They were usually giggling and making fun of my city ways. Eventually though, I did become a country girl.

On a hot day we were playing in the woods swinging on the grape vines and yelling like Tarzan when there appeared a snake. We yelled more. All of sudden the cousins said, "Hear the rattle, run!" So we all ran as fast as we could to the back stoop and up on the porch. Coach whip snakes can run four miles an hour and this one was running 20 miles an hour after us, it seemed --- for miles. Talk

about fast running, we were all track stars that day. Aunt Bea called us in for a glass of tea and we drank that tea like we had been on a sandy desert for days.

The next day after breakfast and doing of our chores, Uncle Wayne said he had something else we could do to help him out. First he gave me

Wilderness House Literary Review 16/1

a tour of the milk separator where cream was removed from the milk of the cows on the place. Then he showed me where the potatoes and peanuts were grown of all things, underground.

Next was the corn field where I, for the first time in my nine years, saw rows of tall stalks of corn growing toward the sky. I had never seen any corn grow before.

To help him out we went back to the house and put on long sleeve shirts and straw hats. My cousins knew what was coming, but I did not. Back to the cornfield, he showed me how to hoe weeds around the corn stalks.

What an education that was

After chopping for a while....I went over to set under a tree next to the corn field to cool off. I took my long sleeve shirt off and my hat and just sat down. My cousins were chopping weeds and grinning at each other. I was not concerned about what was funny....too hot.

Here comes Uncle Wayne. "Connie, what are you doing sitting under the trees?" he asked.

I replied, "It's too hot for me to hoe." He put his hands on his hips and laughed. He called us all into the house for lunch. Noah Glen said, "You need to come more often."

Later that afternoon he told us to put our long-sleeved shirts on and find our straw hats. There went that grinning among cousins again. I thought, something worse is on the way.

Out the back steps of the porch we all followed Uncle Wayne. He led us to the potato patch and showed me how to dig up the potatoes and put them in bags next to us. The heat was even more intense. I dug a while and then a while more. That was it!

I took my digger and bag with me then took off my shirt and hat. I sat down on a wooden box under a tree. Before long, here he came. The cousins looked up to see what would happen this time. For the second time, Uncle Wayne asked, "Connie, why have you quit again?" My reply became my moniker thereafter with my family. I said, "I do not want to get dirt under my fingernails."

This time he roared with laughter and told us all to get to the house and change into our swimming clothes and go to the creek. We ran almost as fast as when the Coach Whip snake was after us to the house and then to the creek.

While we were swimming, Uncle Wayne and Aunt Bea made home-made ice cream with real milk and cream from the cows in the pasture. I have never eaten any ice cream as good since 1945 while in Gordonville, Texas.