

Remembering My Loving Grandma, Susie Hall Lawhorn

She Was Proud To Call Kentucky Her Home

By Nancy Mineer - 1999

Walking down the lane to our old homeplace, a scene from the past my eyes beheld. In button up shoes and long flowing garments, Grandma Susie made her way down the bank to our little country home. It was always a special time when she came. We loved her very much and always had a good time when she came to visit. She would catch the mail truck from Olive Hill, Kentucky, with Mr. Stamper, and usually she would stay a week or two. Sometimes she would bring her quilting pieces with her, and she taught all the grandchildren to knit. It was lots of fun and kept our hands busy, and kept us out of her way, so she could sew on her quilts.

We didn't want Grandma to change her way of dressing. She was a very special person, of Indian descent, and we felt very proud to have her for a grandma. We looked forward to her visits about twice a year. She made it very interesting for us.

She was "chief inspector" of all the dishes in the cabinets, and made sure everything was in order. At times, when we were doing the dishes, she would take all the unused dishes from the cabinet, and we would have to wash them too. It seems we would wash dishes for hours. Of course we didn't like it, and we didn't get out of the kitchen till all were inspected and in order. It was her way of teaching us discipline, and kept us busy at the same time. Her eye sight was like an eagle. She could see a spot, or unwashed bit of food, on the dishes, and many times we had to wash them over. My sisters and I always wanted to go out and play and see what we could get into, but the dishes had to be done first. Grandma saw to that.

We had lots of fun with cousins. Sometimes my mother, Rachel Lee, would make Grandma a pretty

dress while she visited us. She always wore a lovely print dress material. Since she wore a long dress, it contained several yards of material. Grandma always wore her dress down to her ankles. Over her dress, she wore a pretty apron, which was long, and always had two pockets on it. I remember Grandma wore several petticoats. They were long and had pockets sewn on them. She kept her money and Prince Albert tobacco, that came in a little sack with a little draw string, in the pockets.

She always had her stone pipe, that was handed down from her father. It was special to her, for sentimental reasons. We liked to watch her blow smoke, for it was something different, and sometimes I thought it smelled good, anyhow, that was part of her. She had been smoking since she was ten years old. She didn't allow any of us to touch her pipe. She kept it in her apron pocket. I can almost see her today, stoking her tobacco in her pipe, with her long bony fingers. I wonder how many times she burned her fingers.

Grandma wore her hair in a little bun. It was all silver and very long. She loved to sit in a special rocking chair when she came to our house. She looked like a picture, with a little bonnet on to match her dress, sewing on her quilt, smoking her pipe, while

peering over her metal framed glasses, to keep an eye on everything around her. It was a scene that Norman Rockwell would love to have painted.

That was Susie, my grand-maw, who always kept herself busy.

She was good at telling us old tales, and loved to argue for the sake of arguing. She was always right. My sister Velva loved to get into a big argument with her. Sometimes it would go on for a long time. It was all in fun, and we would have to listen. There was never a dull



Susie Hall Lawhorn, 1870-1980.

moment when she was around.

We always had a large family reunion. Everyone would meet at Grandmas and we would have all kinds of delicious food to eat. I can remember Aunt Stella, Cousin Rachel, Harold, and his brother Billy. There was Mary Lee, Myrtle Bell and Susetta. (I have other cousins, some lived in Mansfield, Ohio, the Lawhorns who have a singing group that sounds wonderful and makes lots of tapes.) We played all kinds of games and had lots of fun. I also remember Aunt Allie, she was really nice.

Knowing Kentucky's Wild Flowers

No. 35 In A Series



Purple Flowering Raspberry

The Purple Flowering Raspberry betrays its relationship to the wild rose, and might easily be mistaken for it. The undivided leaves would, at once, correct such an error. The plant had showy blossoms, constantly getting our attention along the wooded roadsides in June and July. The stem is shrubby, and is three to five feet high. The flowers are purplish-pink, large and showy, and are two inches broad. The fruit is reddish, resembling the garden raspberry.

Everything was saved, nothing was wasted. All of our clothes were passed on to others. It seems we wore a lot of "hand-me-down" clothes. I suppose everyone was in the same situation. Lots of dresses were made from feed sacks that were saved for a long time. Often they were traded with others in order to get the same kind of pattern. Usually they were very pretty flowers in a different color. It was hard to wear them out, the material was real heavy and made out of cotton. The more you washed and starched them, the prettier they became. Most everyone called them sack dresses. We were proud to wear them to Sunday School, with a big bow in our hair to match them. It is hard to find them now, and when you do, they are very expensive.

Grandma Susie was very disciplined. She always taught us to eat everything on our plates. We were not to waste any food. She didn't cook different food for certain people. Everyone ate what was prepared on the table.

Grandpa was a quiet person as I remember, I was just a small child when he passed away. He worked in the clay mines and the coal mines. He was short and had a little beard and mustache. He always had a lot of knives that he traded. He loved to sit on the porch and whittle. Sometimes he would make us a whistle. Sometimes he would make us a slingshot. Often we would get in some trouble with it.

Grandma outlived most of her children. She passed away at the age of 110. She told us she could remember shortly after Abraham Lincoln was president of the United States. We loved to sit and listen to her stories of the past, and some of the things that she went through, growing up as a child.

I visited her a few weeks before she died, and she knew me. Her mind was clear and we had a good visit together. Grandma loved to sing and whistle a tune now and then. We sang "On Top Of Old Smoky", and she knew all the verses. There were several little songs she sang, that were real old, and I don't know them. She talked about Lizza Littleton, which I think was her cousin, or someone she grew up with.

Before Grandma passed away, she was interviewed by TV Channel 3 of Huntington, WV, and was on television for a few minutes. She had lots of friends and family. We were all very proud to be grandchildren of her and Grandpa Jess. We remember her as a very special person, who didn't change her way of living to suit the crowd. She had her faith in God, and she knew how to live a good, wholesome life, with a lot of work, and keeping herself busy. Her folklore and remedies of medicine will always be remembered. She was proud of her Indian descent, high cheek bones, and her ability to make a better place to live. God gave her a special task in life: to live long and show others that you can live successfully, a fulfilled life, no matter what age or circumstances. Her life was beautiful and it shined out to others. She was a very special Grandma, was Susie Hall Lawhorn, as I remember her.

Nancy Mineer, P.O. Box 379, South Portsmouth, KY 41174, shares this story with our readers.