

T H E D E A R M A N S

As told by

Mary Clemontine Dearman Motley

My great, great grandfather, Harrison Dearman came from Ireland in 1728. He had two sons, Johnathan and William and my great grandfather Thomas was born three weeks after they landed. They settled in Virginia for awhile and then moved to North Carolina near the Big PeeDee River. Grandfather Johnathan then moved from there to Florida. Several years later grandfather Thomas and his brother, William, moved to Florida, too.

There my grandfather Solomon, son of great grandfather Thomas, married his cousin, Annie Dearman, daughter of Johnathan Dearman. They had never seen each other until he came to Florida.

They lived in Florida until my father, Thomas Lee, was six months old and then the entire family moved near Livingston, Alabama, in 1832. There my grandfather died July 14, 1837. My great grandfather Thomas died there a year later. Great grandfather Johnathan died in 1835.

Great grandfather Thomas had two sons and two daughters. Harrison and Solomon were the boys' names and I can't remember the girls' names. Also, son George.

My grandfather, Solomon Dearman was born in 1798 in North Carolina. He married Annie Dearman (a cousin). They had Elisha, the oldest boy, Mary, Jerusha, Leita, Thomas Lee, America, Johnathan, Drusilla, and Nellie.

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Thomas Lee, my father, married Sarah Thorne.

My grandfather on my mother's side was Jessie B. Thorne. My grandmother was Jerrusha Beavers. My grandfather Thorne was born 1811 in North Carolina and died July 17, 1886. My grandmother was born in North Carolina in 1812 and died September 15, 1867.

They had six girls and two boys. The girls were Melissa, Jane, Sarah (my mother), Edna, Susan and Nancy. The boys were James and William.

Melissa married John Boyet, Jane married William Litchfield, Sarah married Thomas Lee Dearman, Edna died at an early age. Susan married Henry Walker and Nancy married Caswel Shelton. James married Margret Jones from Alabama.

I, Mary Clemontine, was born August 17, 1857, in Sumter County, Alabama, near Cuba Alabama.

There were Letia, Jerrusha, William Henry, Hassie, Isaac and Jacob (twins), Elizabet, Theodocia, Emma and Irene. I was the oldest.

Letia married Zack Williams the first time, the second time Weseley Haywood. Jerrusha married Joel Banks. W.H. (Bud) married Fanny Dearman. Hassie married Joseph Williams. Isaac married Bessie Knight, Jacob died at the age of seventeen, Docia married Eugene Shaw, Emma married William Winningham, Irene

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My mother died November 28, 1877. She was buried at Mount Gillard Cemetery, near Cuba, Alabama. In 1881 my father married Nannie Banks. Sister to Joel Banks. Their children were Mary, who married Dempsy Dearman, Thomas who married Salley Mae Tate (then a Jarmon), Allie, who married Robert Stephens, Leddie, who married Ben Knight, Essie, who married Percy Jones.

The first school I attended was in a log cabin in 1864. The teacher was Miss Emma Wright. Some of my classmates were Edith Bryant, Delia Banes, Emma Tate, Lula Tate, Bill Quinby, Alice Martin and O'phelia Sheffield. The second and third year I went to Mr. James McElroy. Several of my friends were Fannie Bland, Emma and Lola Tate, Sally Harris. Next teachers were Mr. Will Farrow, B.F. Watson, W. R. Chambers, and John Adams.

Our games were hiding-seeek or hide-a-stick and somebody find it. We took our lunch in a tin bucket and we ate on the ground under the shade of a tree. If one had something extra in his lunch he always divided with the rest of us.

We knew about the celebration of Christmas but we did not know about Santa Claus until Christmas, 1870.

Uncle George Dearman was the first one to tell my small brothers and sisters about Santa Claus. On Christmas Eve, he and my father went to Cuba. That night Uncle George told the children to hang up their stockings. Everyone did except my brother, Bud.

"I don't believe in it. How can Santa Claus come down

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The next morning all the children were delighted to find oranges, apples, and candy in their stockings. There wasn't a more disappointed boy in Alabama that morning than Bud.

"Well," he said, "I just didn't believe it."

"Well," said Uncle George, "go look in your shoe. Perhaps he left something in it."

Bud pulled his shoes from under the bed. There were oranges, apples,, and candy in his shoes.

"I'll believe in Santa after this," he said.

After that Christmas was celebrated in our home as it is today.

That Christmas of 1870, I spent on Mobile Bay with grandfather Thorne and Uncle Henry Walker. I had never heard of Santa Claus, but I didn't tell anyone while they were all talking. Late that evening Uncle Henry said, "All of you hang up your stockings."

We did and the next morning there were apples and candy. Oranges weren't anything special to them as they raised their own on the Bay,

That day Mr. and Mrs. Parrish and their children came over. Jimmy, their son, asked what Santa Claus gave us. I didn't answer for I still did not know who Santa was.

Then he explained that every Christmas Eve they hung up their stockings to get presents. Again on New Year Eve they would hang up their stockings,"but" Jimmy explained, "we won't get much

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for then Santa's wife comes and she is very poor."

When my father came after me, Uncle Henry sent my brother Bud some torpedoes. Those were the first he had ever seen and he had fun fooling the older people.

Old Preacher Stephens came that evening, he was always slow but when the torpedoes exploded under him, he moved fast.

Later he said he thought a gun had fallen and gone off. Those were the first torpedoes anyone around that part of the country had seen.

They had no sewing machines. All the clothes were sewn by hand. The men's pants were cut out of homespun cloth. The best shirts were pleated on each side, much as women's blouses are today. Later the shirts were opened at the back.

All the cloth was woven at home. It was either wool or cotton. The thread was spun first then wound on a reel, then dyed, usually yellow, copperus color, blue, or black. The dyes were made from barks and roots of trees, adding copperus. Blue was made from a weed called indigo. Everyone had an indigo patch to use for making dye.

Although I was not very fast at the loom, I could weave ten yards of plain cloth a day. Mrs. Roberts (John Bank's aunt) could weave eighteen yards a day.

We would weave wool to make the men's suits. We made entire suits. Of course, every woman couldn't make a suit but there were usually several women in the community who could. The people spun thread in exchange for cutting the coats. No one was

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paid in money for cutting them, but with so many hanks of thread.

The way the sewing thread was made was by spinning the thread finer than the thread used for weaving. One would take two broaches and catch each end and wind so it would be double to make it stronger. It was then wound into a ball. The ball was then placed in soapy water and boiled for about half an hour and put on the spindel holder. Then it was taken off and wound on another ball or a board. It was ready for use. If the material was dark the thread was dyed to match the cloth.

We went to church regularly and wore our home spun clothes. We never had a night meeting during the protractor meetings (revival) but there were two services a day.

The visiting day was Sunday. No visits were exchanged during the week unless someone was sick.

A child twelve years old had never been more than ten miles from home. As a child Letia and I would go to Cousin Mollie Dearman's and Preacher Banes' to spend the night with their children. They lived about a mile from us until after the Civil War. Though everyone had fine stable horses no one thought of riding to church. Sometimes a few would come in an ox wagon.

My grandfathers were both public speakers. Grandfather Solomon was to go to a public dinner on July 4th (a barbecue). He was to make a speech. On the morning the negro saddled his horse and brought it around to the hitching post. Grandfather didn't come out of his room for sometime so my grandmother went in to see about him. He lay on the bed, Muck, the negro, put his

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Grandfather was good to his negroes. The more he bragged on Muck, the stable boy, the better care he took of the horses.

Grandmother's housegirl was named Lucy.

My grandmother said she always tried to please Grandfather as long as it was reasonable. He never tried to make her do anything but one time.

Several days after killing hogs they received a letter inviting them to Grandfather's sister's wedding. Grandmother began to get ready to go.

"Well, Annie, you can't go," said Grandfather Solomon.

"I don't see why I can't," said Grandmother, "I was invited the same as you."

"Well, we have just killed all these hogs and someone will have to look after the meat."

"Muck and Lucy tend it anyway," answered Grandmother and kept right on preparing for the journey.

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"Well," said grandmother, "I am going."

After they had gone about a half of mile grandfather bursted out laughing and said, "I see I will have to go back and get the buggy if you are going."

The rest of the way he begged her not to tell anyone. When they arrived the family all rushed out to see the baby. They were so afraid she wasn't going to come because of the bad weather.

"Solomon did try to make me stay at home," said Grandmother.

That broke Grandfather. He never tried to make her do anything again.

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