

- **Claiborne County Progress**

Nell Quesenberg Report

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DORA JENNINGS - HIRED GIRL

By Nell Quesenberg

In Cash's book, "Mind of the South," he writes that many times, the Southern hired girl, though economically deprived, is often tied by close blood kinship to the family for whom she works.

With the exception of Dora Jennings (Granny), the people that made up my mother's lineal descent following the Civil War were in comfortable circumstances.

Like many other families at this time, they often intermarried, causing closer than normal blood kinships. In 1855, the Yoakums and Van Bebbers came to Lone Mountain from Powell Valley. Once here, they began intermarrying with descendants of early Clinch River settlers, the Jennings and the Moores. These lines make up my mother's ancestors.

My great-grandmother, Dora Jennings Yoakum Holland, through blood or marriage, was kin to all of these people. Poverty and loss of her family ties caused her to become the hired girl of Robert and Lucinda Jennings Yoakum.

Dora married their youngest son, James Randolph Yoakum (Judge). They had one child, Horace Clayton Yoakum (my grandfather). Later, there was a bill of divorcement between Judge and Dora. They are listed in Claiborne County marriage record Number 8-138.

The following account was written by Richard Austin "Dick" Yoakum in August, 1977. Dick is the great-grandson of Robert and Lucinda Jennings Yoakum:

ROBERT G. YOAKUM AND LUCINDA JENNINGS

Robert G. Yoakum was born in Claiborne County, Tennessee, September 6, 1824. He married Lucinda Jennings June 20, 1856. Ten children were born of this union, with four dying at an early age.

Robert G. Yoakum was a Republican, but was not a member of any church, but favored the Methodist Church of which his wife was a member.

He received a common school education and was educated above the average man of his time. He was a kindly man, good to his family and slaves, some of which, or their descendants, worked for him until his death.

A good manager, businessman and stock trader, he was in the mercantile business from 1875 to 1885 on the Lone Mountain Creek. He was in partnership seven years in this business with his nephew, James Yoakum.

About 1855, he purchased the Yoakum farm and owned about 350 acres. An enterprising farmer and stockman, he pastured the mountain, keeping it free from brush and bramble. His land was in fine shape for cultivation.

The water for his home came from a spring about three-fourths of a mile up the mountain. He transported water to the springhouse near his home via wooden poles with a "v" cut in them. The poles were supported in the air by crossed sticks about six feet long.

Water was run into the springhouse into a large wooden trough where milk was kept. The water ran through the springhouse and outside to another trough where the cattle got good clear spring water.

This gravity water system was a fine thing for the time, and Robert G. Yoakum's son, Joseph Sherman Yoakum, used pipe and the gravity system to put a bathroom in the house, which was the first in that locality.

There were three large ponds on the place and one sank, almost pulling some people into it.

This farm stayed in the Yoakum family for almost a century and a quarter. It was sold to the Sam Crawford family.

MARRIAGES OF THE CHILDREN OF

ROBERT G. YOAKUM AND LUCINDA JENNINGS:

1. Ewing Franklin Yoakum married Elizabeth Mountin (Dick's grandparents).
2. Grant Yoakum married Ludie Larimer (Dr. Larimer's daughter).
3. Burnside Yoakum married Mollie Payne (she later married Hugh Hodges).
4. Joseph Sherman Yoakum married Mollie Walker.
5. James Randolph Yoakum married No. 1 Dora Jennings (my great grandmother) and No. 2 Viola Campbell.
6. Dorcas Yoakum married John Mason.

Lois Bunch Justice has moved from next door to my parents. Our son, Jackie, has moved into this house. We will miss Lois.

CORRECTION: Maggie McBee said her mother, Emily Jennings, was Dora's half-sister; that Emily was a full sister to John and Jim Jennings. Sam Jennings may have also been a full brother to Jim and John. Does anyone know for sure?

Nellie Campbell called me, and I just loved her. Nellie, age 87, told me about the old zinc mines, the old families, Buzzard's Glory settlement, and Buzzard's Glory School down on lower Straight Creek Road. Soon, Nellie plans to write an article about Buzzard's Glory History for the Progress. She said Dora (Granny) had a full brother, Hugh Jennings, who married Jim Brown's sister, Rean. They lived for awhile at the head of Crawford Hollow on Bear Creek. Then they moved to Anderson County.

My query: Does anyone know who raised Hugh Jennings? Write Nell Quesenbery, P.O. Box 185, Lone Mountain, Tennessee 37773; (615) 626-3250.