

- **Claiborne County (TN) Progress**

Nell Quesenbery Report

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MEMORIES OF HENRY AND LEONA BREEDING

By Nell Quesenbery

I met Lois Breeding Hatfield for the first time the night the Leabow children were receiving friends at the wake of their mother, the late Lillie Leabow of Lone Mountain.

Sitting beside Mary and Helen Payne, I became aware that their attention had centered on a tall, willowy, very good-looking blonde lady, accompanied by several pretty young ladies.

Inquiring if this was the daughter of Henry and Leona Breeding and gaining an affirmative, I was determined to meet Lois.

Henry and Leona (Leona was Lillie Leabow's oldest sister) were people who had left Lone Mountain fifty years ago, but, especially among my family, a persistent gentle memory, occasionally given verbal utterances, was left behind.

Granny, Dora Jennings Holland, who once worked in Henry and Leona Breeding's home, adored them. As I grew up, Granny often spoke to me about how well she liked Henry and Leona.

My mother, Louise Yoakum Marchio, remembers seeing her first Christmas tree decorated with real burning candles at Henry and Leona's house. She also remembers Leona often handing her candy out of the family-owned mercantile store in Lone Mountain.

Helen Payne also remembers the candy treats. She said, "Henry and Leona Breeding were kind and wonderful people, almost too good-hearted for their own good."

The Breedings were an old Claiborne County family. Henry's father and mother were Lewis Breeding and Paulina Simmons Breeding. Lewis being the son of John and Mary Elizabeth Stone Breeding.

Lewis and Paulina had twelve children of whom eight lived to become grown and married. Those eight listed in order of their ages, along with whom they married, are: Lula Breeding married Silas Shropshire; Newt Breeding married Elizabeth Farmer; Mary Elizabeth Breeding married the Rev. Kelly Harrell; Henry Breeding married Leona Welch; Dollie Breeding married Ed Lovelace; Lettie Breeding married Dan Yoakum; Artie Breeding married Randell Tillett, and Kate Breeding married Elmer Rosenbalm.

While Leona was the daughter of James (Jim) Welch and Elizabeth Williams Welch of Liberty Hill, Grainger County, Tennessee, Leona's brothers and sisters were Hulda Welch Nash, Elora Welch Hamilton, Lillie Welch Leabow, Lone Welch, Irvin Welch and the twins Floyd and Lloyd. Floyd died young, but Lloyd lived to be old.

Henry met Leona at the Elm Springs Baptist Church in Grainger County, near Liberty Hill. Their courtship was consummated by a marriage ceremony performed on the train that ran from Knoxville, Tennessee, to Middlesboro, Kentucky. This train made stops at both Elm Springs and Lone Mountain.

The marriage ceremony, symbolic of their firm Grainger County-Claiborne County union, was performed as they crossed the county line into Claiborne by Uncle Joe Yoakum, Justice of the Peace. Uncle Joe just happened to be on that particular train, returning to his farm on Bear Creek in Claiborne County.

Jim Welch, Leona's father, and Henry opened a mercantile store in Lone Mountain. At the same time, Henry and Leona operated a boarding house. They, at various times, both taught school. Henry also worked as a surveyor.

The Breedings had two children, Edmund, the beautiful-faced boy with dark eyes and hair, and Lois, with the bright blue eyes and silky blonde hair, who was almost two years younger than Edmund.

In 1929, when Lois was ten, Henry and Jim Welch sold the Lone Mountain store, and the Breedings left Lone Mountain. Henry later worked for the Tennessee Valley Authority until his retirement.

Lois had many memories of Lone Mountain. She remembers when her Aunt Lillie married the very handsome Hobart Leabow of Lone Mountain, with his long patrician face, warm blue eyes and fine dark hair. They were married at the home of Frank and Alice Adkins, down Bear Creek way, across from Walker's Ford, on the far side of the Clinch River in Union County.

It was during the time in the twenties, when our American Flapper girl was very much alive. Dresses had become short, the waist lowered, with a short band of pleats creating a most exciting effect of newly seen legs, rolled down stockings and patent leather shoes. The hair was bobbed and shaped closely in toward the face, and if, like Lillie's, that hair and those eyes were dark, so much the better.

Lillie's dark red satin wedding dress, cut in the new style of the twenties, with a large cloth flower in exactly the same material on the right side of the skirt, cause Lois to vow, "I'll have one just like it when I get big."

Last year, Lois helped organize the first annual Breeding reunion at Springdale Elementary School. This year, July 6, 1980, the Breedings will hold their second annual Breeding reunion at Springdale Elementary School.