

- **Claiborne County (TN) Progress**

Nell Quesenbery Report

May 22, 1980

TENNESSEE “TENNY” HOPSON (May 26, 1897)

By Nell Quesenbery

Standing on Tenny Hopson’s front porch and looking to the northeast, one can see the butt of the Powell Mountain, with its high ribs locomotivating eastwardly. While stepping to the other end of her porch, looking to the southwest, one sees the closer, more familiar butt of Lone Mountain.

Tenny’s stripped, boxed house, gray and weathered, stands sturdily, west of the Southern Railroad tracks on the edge of the Lone Mountain road. Dominating this area are the houses of her daughter, Alva Lee, wife of Clarence Shumate, and Clarence’s mother, Ausie Bush Shumate.

Today, these houses don’t look much different from the time I was a child, walking to the Lone Mountain School in the morning and back home again at night. Most of the older people are still living in them, just the children are gone.

Tenny is a small woman, with dainty proportions. Her facial features, hands and ankles are finely made, with lively eyes of a blue not matched anywhere, except in members of her family.

Other than looking a little older, Tenny appears much the same today, with her clean bibbed apron and bright print dress. Tan cotton hose cover her small fine legs that slip into neatly laced shoes.

As we returned home from our school day, Tenny would always be watching for the children. Her two were Lagonda and Don. Clarence and Alva Lee had three beautiful girls, her grandchildren, Margaret, Helen and Eloise, for whom she also watched. Coming home, too, would be Bob, Johnny and Zola Mae, children by Clarence’s first marriage, who lived with his parents, John and Ausie Bush Shumate.

Tenny's wash line was stretched along the road between her house and the railroad tracks. On most clear days, the line was filled with brightly hung clothes. Tenny helped earn money for her household by "taking in wash" for some of the other families. Tenny's "wash" always impressed me as the cleanest I've ever seen. Her brilliant results were achieved by hand scrubbing, using tubs and a washboard.

Her parents, Sim and Delia "Lila" Jordan, lived in Grainger County in the Jordan Hollow section of Dry Valley. Sim occupied himself with logging. While running a raft of logs down the Clinch River, he was drowned just above Baylor's Bridge.

After Sim Jordan's death, when Tenny was three, Lila moved to Claiborne County with her children. The other Jordan children were Margaret, Ann Lillie, Joshie Doll, Nancy "Creddie" and the only boy, Clay. The girls in the family all married men from Claiborne County, many of their children bearing the remarkable blue "Jordan" eyes. Among Clay's children, this is especially so.

It was on February 14, 1914, that Tenny married Pryor Lee Hopson. Today, this date is Valentine's Day, but in 1914, Tenny claims, "there was no such thing as Valentine's Day."

The Hopsons were among the first settlers of Lone Mountain. The children of Pryor and Tenny were Clayton, Ed, Doris, Anna Lou, Alva Lee, Lagonda and Don.

After the death of Pryor on April 21, 1971, Tenny still maintained her home. Now, her youngest son, Don, lives with her.

Happy birthday, Tennessee "Tenny" Hopson. May you have many, many more.