

## “Always Blessed With Doctrines and Enough Material Things”

By Barbara Myers

My maternal grandmother, Mary (Headrick) Dove, was half-Cherokee from her mother's side of the family. Elizabeth “Eliza” Anderson from the Marion County area was full Cherokee dating back to the earlier descendants. I came across several names amongst our family that were close Cherokee. Celia (Headrick) Braden records state that she was full Cherokee. She is a sister to grandmother's aunt.

Granny was one of the kindest, most generous ladies that anyone could have ever known. She was old-fashioned and never changed down through the years. Because of her Indian heritage, she was knowledgeable of herbs and their uses. Where discipline was concerned, her doctrine of using a hickory stick was always before her children and grandchildren. She stated to her youngest, “The use of that hickory stick had never broken up any homes or any bones as far back as she could remember.” I guess my mom and dad certainly listened, for they used it quite often in our household. They had a certain place for keeping one, over Mom's high kitchen cabinet. The longer it lay there the harder it got and the worse it hurt when you got a licking from it.

Granny always made her chickory coffee. Mom often said that it was like medicine, for it soothed a bad headache. It was so strong and worked on you.

In 1948 Mom's youngest sister, Elizabeth “Lizzie,” left Grundy County after the death of her husband. She left four children for her mother to raise. Granny was in bad health with some heart trouble. She was in no condition to raise four children, the youngest being four-years-old. The worse part of the whole thing was the fact that her baby, Lizzie, was gone. Granny carried a heavy burden over her loss of contact with her own daughter.

Lizzie wrote her a rather lengthy letter telling her why she was leaving and never returning. It broke Granny's heart. She sat hour upon hour glancing at that letter, clutching it close to her heart. Granny never learned to read or write as a child or even as an adult. Lizzie's oldest daughter, whom Granny had practically raised, read the letter to her time after time. But Granny felt that it made no sense for her daughter to do what she had done, leaving four sweet children behind. She asked herself over and over, “Why?”

There was a lot of concern from Granny's brothers and other family members as to how Mary was going to survive trying to raise those children. She always said that

she cared nothing about material things. As long as people gave them clothes, and there was enough food to set before the children, they would survive.

Gardens could be planted in the Spring providing vegetables such as potatoes. There were fruits and berries to can for the winter months. She had no electricity because she was afraid of it. Her oldest granddaughter said that her mother Lizzie was also scared of lightning believing that it might strike the electric lines and burn down the house. Like the Headricks, I know that Indian blood ran thick through their veins. Having an old wood stove to heat and cook on was far better and made the food tastier. However, the ironing was a lot harder and hotter when you had to heat the iron on the stove in order to iron out the wrinkles. I know because I have used them many times throughout the years.

So to Granny, material things like an electric stove, oven, washer or an iron, didn't matter. She had the prettiest white sheets and pillowcases on her bed. They were ironed and also had been embroidered with pretty flowers and birds. No one was allowed to sit on the beds. Our entertainment was listening to stories told by our elders. There was no television, but sometimes we listened to the radio, but not Granny.

Granny and my mother grieved over Aunt Lizzie leaving and not returning. I did a lot of research hoping to find her, but I didn't come up with much. I'm sure Granny and Mom went to their graves wondering where she had gone and why she really left.

Maybe there was a reason she had to leave, maybe for her own security. No one will know. Two of her children have died, but two still live. Maybe she's passed away by now although I am sure she is in her eighties or nineties. Only God knows. I do wish that we could have found out something about her. There have been many changes in all our lives over the sixty years since she left us. And a lot more changes are due for many of us in the days ahead.