

## Oma Dell Langford Brewer

**Oma Dell Lankford Brewer** was born May 23, 1905 in Tracy City, in Grundy County (TN) to **Jacob and Martha Cansada (Dugan) Lankford**. She was the youngest of 5 children. (Her sister) **Lula Bell** and brother **Hollis** died while they were young and are buried in the City Cemetery at Tracy City, as are her parents and older brother **Douglas Lankford**. A sister **Lela Lankford** married **Abner Cannon** and she is buried at Fall Creek Cemetery where **Oma Dell** is buried. She was a child interested in education and school from the beginning.

She spent her early school days at Shook and graduated in 1924 from Shook High School in Tracy City.

She went to Middle Tennessee State University one year and took a teaching place at Palmer Elementary, boarding in Palmer with her sister Lela and family. This is where she met her husband **Jim Brewer** marrying him in December 1925.

She put her teaching profession on hold and had 3 children, a son **James Douglas** and 2 daughters, **Rosa Nell** and **Anna Joyce**. She did return to teaching after the 2 oldest children married and Joyce was in 7<sup>th</sup> grade. Between workshops and on campus classes she was within reach of her B. S. but sickness always seemed to hinder her. She taught school about 30 years before retiring in 1970 (?).

My mom and dad built a small house in Tatesville when they were starting their family. This was in the late 20's and early 30's. When my Grandpa Brewer died they sold this house and moved in with my Grandma Brewer. This was early in the depression days and there wasn't a lot of food and live off the land some what. We always had plenty to eat but not a lot of money.

My mother could do about anything and was very efficient in the home as well as the garden and the classroom as well. She also worked at a "sewing room" in Palmer making boy's overalls during these hard times. My mom had a lot of personal pride and always taught us the same. She would always say "Hold your head High and Keep trying, Be Somebody."

She left us with a good heritage of doing our best and to fear God and respect older people. Nothing was too hard for her. I have many happy memories growing up. Play houses, dolls, mud pies, and wading the creek, etc. "Buggin" Beans and Potatoes in the garden to help. There was very little chemicals then to spray or dust with.

In spite of all the hard times, there was still birthday parties, Easter baskets, very good Christmases and going to Sunday School and Church.

She had many different kinds of experiences teaching school. She had her rules in school and anyone who broke them received "paddlins" even me in 7<sup>th</sup> grade and her grand-children who were all her students but maybe one or two out of 12 grand children.

One student came up for discipline and he said "Miss Oma Dell you can't paddle me "I have Heart trouble" and she replied softly, "Bend Over \_\_\_\_\_ so do I have heart trouble. Today children in school are not disciplined as teachers were allowed to do then. It never hurt them and I think it helped them to have more respect for teachers and every one involved.

One mother I recall ask(ed) my mom not to expel her boys for misbehaving but keep them in school and paddle them and she would do the same when they got home.

Collins School was my mom's second school to teach. It was a small one room school located on a small hill in a field above **Mr. Norman Meek's** home. At one time she spoke about the hogs sleeping under the building at night and sometimes at daytime. This little school later was moved over near the Main Hwy 108 where the last school stood. In her last years of teaching this school was the place and it had grown so much it was 5 or 6 classrooms, large cafeteria, auditorium and library. I remember, Tatesville school, and Barker were consolidated there. We had good PTA members to work with also and happy times making money to buy playground equipment and cafeteria supplies. In order to do this we donated food cooked it for dinners, brought it back to earn money.

My mother's school day did not end at 3:00 p.m. She would work at home many nights till midnight on reports, grading papers and class outlines and tests for the next day. But doing school work never hindered her from doing her church dwork, she also taught Sunday school classes, vacation bible school in summer and was a board member for her church serving as secretary and sometimes also (the) treasurer. With all this going on she never neglected being a good mother and grandmother. Never too busy to listen to a problem we had or trying to solve it for us. I'm sure we disappointed her sometimes but she never disappointed us.

Our dad Passed away in 1953 at the age of only 47 years old. My mom was only 47 years old. A young Widow but never was interested in remarrying. She was happy being who she was and lived for her church, school and family.

The death of our brother was such a shock to our mom in 1980 she really never recovered from it. She had a stroke in late 1980 and things went down hill form that. But she still managed to walk out of a nursing home in 1981 after months of therapy. Things were pretty good for a couple of years but then she had more problems and was not able to live in her home alone. Hr choice was to go the Haven of Rest to stay. During this time there she was not idle either. She had Bible study classes with the residents that were more disabled than she. She was instrumental in getting a flag pole and flag put up at the Haven of Rest. This was the way my mom was. She liked to see and help get things done that meant something. She was the greatest mom in the world. We still miss her so much.

This article was probably written by Oma Dell Brewer a Grundy County Teacher,

## Why I am Taking This Course

As our instructor you have asked each of us to give our reasons for attending the English Workshop.

First of all, I need the credits as I am working off my two years college.

Next, as I am a teacher of the intermediate grades I need a general review or refreshing of my English work.

Last, but not least I know I will enjoy the course as English has always been one of my preferred subjects through my school years.

Now that I have given my reasons for taking this course I shall tell you something of my life.

I was born on May 23, 1905, in Tracy City, (Tennessee) and attended elementary and high school here. In the Fall after I finished high school I began teaching. I taught three terms of school, attending Middle Tennessee State College in the summer.

In 1925 I married and decided to give up my teaching and make a home for my husband. Three children blessed our home and we were very happy, but all the time there was a strong desire to take up my teaching again. As I lived near a school, I was called on very often to substitute in the absence of a teacher, which kindled the flame more and more to teach again.

Every time I would mention going to school and preparing to teach again, my husband bitterly opposed my leaving the children. I finally gave up the idea completely and settled down to my home life and made my children's school days as happy as I possibly could for I literally lived mine over through them.

When the war started and defense work and large salaries called so many teachers from the school rooms, and there was such a demand for teachers, I was given a school close to my home.

Since then I have continued my teaching and as I couldn't leave my family to go to college, I have attended the workshops and have derived much good from them. They have been a blessing to me and an answer to my great desire to get some more college work.