

THE STORY OF MY LIFE

AS MUCH AS I CAN RECOLLECT

By Gladys (Potter) Frazier

My parents were Daniel and Jennie (Broyles) Potter. My father was born in Marysville, Missouri and mother in Princeton, Missouri, Mercer County. They were married in Missouri where my brother Riley was born in 1881 and sister Edith in 1883. Then they, with father's brother Nute and Uncle Will Potter came west on the train, arriving in Weiser around 1884.

To this union nine children were born; Riley and Edith in Missouri, Etta was born in 1885 on the John Reed farm on the big Weiser river above Middle Valley (now Midvale). I was born there in 1888. Brother Cassie and sister Ruth were born on the Mark Lewis place, Cassie in 1891 and Ruth in 1893. Sister Bertha was born at Salubria on the Bill Wilkerson place in 1895, brother Milton was born on the Paul Wilkerson place in 1898 and sister Opal was born on the Clay Sutton place in 1902. Brother Riley never married. Edith married Clarence Grogan, Etta married Bert Branch, I married Clyde Frazier, Cassie married Lulu Carpenter, Ruth married Horace Yongue, Bertha married Roy Sumpter, Milton married Nettie Whitely and Opal married Harry Lake. The Lewis place is the first place I can recollect. We lived there about nine years. We lived close to a neighbor that was hard to get along with; in fact, he was going to kill my father - even dug his

grave, but somehow didn't get around to it. He didn't want to waste his ammunition I guess. As far as I know the grave is still there!

My father was putting in his spring planting and in the evenings turned his horses out on the outside range as he was short of hay; then he would gather them up in the morning. One morning mother gathered them and she had to go right past this man's house and the man ran out and chased them back towards the hills. She told my father and Uncle Nute. Uncle Nute was living with us and he had a quick temper. He said to mother, "Let me have that horse!" and he rounded up the horses and drove them as close to this man's door as he could (his yard wasn't fenced) and the man never came out. Ha! It's a good thing for him he didn't. (Maybe he was taking his morning nap). We liked everyone else. We had a hard time making a living but I can't recollect a time that we didn't have plenty of meat. We had a big spring on the place and raised a big garden. Mother's cousin, Edwin Hill, built mother a loom and she wove carpets for our home and for other people. I recollect she wove one for Seppie Keithley. I think her husband's name was John. As I recollect, she got nine dollars for that carpet and I thought, "Gee, that is a lot of money!" Weaving was hard work. Sister

Edith used to help some, but mother was afraid she wouldn't get it even so she did it mostly by herself.

Father used to cut hair for several boys in the valley. He used an apple box for them to sit on. He set the box in the shade

While we were still on that place, the squirrels, grasshoppers, crickets and yes, even blackbirds, took a lot of the crops. The crickets came in swarms just like bees, and as soon as one of the farmers saw them coming, he would send work as quick as he could. Nearly everyone had hogs and they

After the crops were in, all the men that could, found other work to do. My father's job was driving horse power for Uncle Frank's threshing machine. Uncle Frank tended the separator. They would go as far as Boise valley, then when they got back home they would thresh their own crops. When that was finished they hauled wood from the mountains. One time they were on Keithley Creek getting wood. Brother Cassie and Uncle Frank's boy, Fred, were cutting wood during the week and father and Uncle Frank would go up with the teams and haul it out. One spring they had their teams tied to wagons, or at least Uncle Frank did. Brother Milton was up the creek a little ways and he ran down as fast as he could and yelled, "Dad, there is a flood coming!" Dad answered, "Oh, I guess not", but he saw right away that it was right on them. Dad got his team out. Brother Cassie was watching Uncle Frank as he knew he would try to save his team. Uncle Frank made a lunge for his team and Cassie grabbed Uncle Frank. He knew he couldn't hold him so he grabbed a thorn tree with his other hand and ran a bit thorn in his hand. He saved Uncle Frank, but his team and wagon all went with the flood. Both horses drowned tied to the wagon, and they were a fine span of horses. That hurt!

When they had enough wood for winter, Dad hauled freight from Weiser to We kids loved to tramp up and

of the house and one day, when he finished, he went in the house, leaving the box outside. Brother Riley sat sister Edith on the box and had nearly all of her hair cut off before the folks noticed it.

would meet the crickets with their hogs and they would gobble them up as fast as they could. Then all at once, they quit coming. They would eat anything that was edible, even gooseberries! But the grasshoppers stayed with us.

Salubria for Smith's store. Sometimes he went as far as Huntington. He drove a four horse team. He would stop at home on the way back and stay all night and go on to Salubria the next day. We lived on the Sutton place then and once in a while he would let one of us kids go up with him. Sometimes they would get stuck when the roads were bad in the early spring and I just loved to throw rocks at the horse that wasn't doing it's share. I still love to see horses have to get down and pull hard to get going!

I am getting a little ahead of my story. While we lived on the Lewis place, us kids liked to go up the big hill to go coasting. Brother Riley pulled the bobsled up the hill and he, Edith, Etta, and I were going to ride it down. Any one that knows anything about bobsleds, knows the runners are slick as glass. Riley yelled, "Jump on!" and we did. I thought I could ride anything Riley could. He was 16 and I was 10. Etta and Edith didn't get on. When we got started I yelled, "I'll bet my money on the bob tailed horse and who'll bet on the bay?"

And about that time the sled gave a lurch over a low place and I fell off and slid a long ways on my knees. I wore that scar for 40 years or more. As my brother would say, "That bobsled would go like greased lightening"; and he rode it until it stopped, about a quarter of a mile down the hill. down the creek beds looking for

arrowheads. We were moving up to Salubria on a ranch that Dad had rented from Bill Wilkerson. It was in the spring of the year and I got my feet wet and caught cold. It settled in my throat and it swelled real bad. Dad went ahead and moved, then took me to Dr. Brown at Salubria. The doctor said, "Well, it isn't quite ready to lance yet, but you watch it and when you think it is ready, you go ahead and lance it, as you can do as good a job as I can." So he did. Another time I had a seed wart on my eyelid and he cut it off. He also cut a big sliver out of my toe.

One time my mother had a sick spell and she didn't have the medicine she needed. She told sister Etta to ride the horse over to Aunt Hannah Ader's for the medicine and told brother Cassie to ride with her and open the gates so she could make better time. They got about to the gate and I think Cassie kicked the horse in the flank with his heel. Anyway, the horse bucked them both off. The horse was shod and she stepped on the fleshy part of Etta's leg and sunk the cork of the shoe in her leg. She wore that scar to her grave.

On this same place, Dad used to drown out squirrels. He had big pond on the place and he would hitch the team to the wagon, drive in this pond and fill a big barrel with water. Then he would drive along the ditch bank and drown the squirrels out. Etta had a little dog for a pet and this dog would grab the squirrel as it came out and kill it. Etta thought she would help so she got a big club and when the squirrel came out Etta hit at the squirrel and hit her dog on the head, and Dad had to kill it as it had fits after that. She always had to have something for a pet. Once she had a pet pig, and it kept coming in the kitchen. It made me so mad I got a big club and hit it as hard as I could. It went out dragging one leg. I don't remember what became of it. Then she had a pet duck and brother Cassie

When brother Cassie was around five or six years old, he was afraid of the

tried to teach it to swim. He held it around the neck and ducked it under. When he turned it loose it couldn't swim because it was dead. He had choked it to death! He was about three years old then.

While living on the Wilkerson place, we kids, Edith, Etta, Cassie and I had about three miles to go to school; so we drove a team and a two-seated sleigh. My oldest sister, Edith, drove. It was in the winter time and the ice on the creek was pretty thick. They had to cut the ice wide enough so the team could go through and as we were coming home, as the team went into the water, one horse jumped out on the ice and the sleigh tipped over and dumped all of us in the icy water. The team ran home and Dad caught them, turned them around and came back after us. He whipped them and ran them as hard as they could go to get there and back. It was close to a mile. I started to float under the ice and Etta caught my coat and pulled me out. Another time my mother told me to get on the horse and go after the milk cows. We had to cross a river and Brother Cassie wanted to go with me. Mother said, "No, if Gladys goes alone it will be all right, but if you go, they will run with you as both horses had been run on the track a lot. He waited until mother went in the house, then he went in the barn and got Silas' paint horse that was tied in the barn, and saddled on it, got on him and caught up with me. When we got across the river we started them up at a gallop and they both started running. Cassie got his horse stopped as he had a saddle on, but I was riding bareback and couldn't stop her and she jumped a wide creek. I fell off and lit on my shoulder but I got up and got on her and we drove the cows home without any more trouble. I was 10 years old and Cassie was 8. We made sure to hold them down until we got home. The mare I was riding belonged to a saloon keeper, Mart Hannin, of Salubria. I didn't blame him as us older kids would go out to the barn (he was always

with us) and we would scream and run for the house and say, "There is a coyote!" He would run after us and not say a word. He was so fat he couldn't run very fast! One evening, he went down in the field with his dog and he was having so much fun running and playing that before he knew it, it was getting dark. He ran as hard as he could to get to the house. When he came in he was puffing so he could hardly talk and he said, "Me and that other dog ran all the way to the house!" He didn't want us to know he was afraid. For that matter, I was afraid of the dark, too.

Then we moved back to Midvale and worked through haying and worked at different places until we were able to take care of ourselves. While living on the Sutton place, most of us children were grown. Sister Etta was married and moved to Sublimity, Oregon, about 60 miles south of Salem, and I took a notion I wanted to visit her. So as soon as I worked and made enough money to make the trip, I went down, but didn't have enough money to buy a suit case. I packed the few clothes I

That winter Cassie and I went to Manor, Washington to work for Herman Potter in his sawmill. Then Cassie went back to Midvale and stayed on through most of the summer. Alice Potter went with me to find a job. She had never been away from home and wanted to see what it was like. We both had boyfriends there, but we went to Long Beach, Washington. The first night we were there we were robbed. The next morning we found out we were broke.

Alice said, "Why don't you send and get the money you left with Dad." I said, "No, we are going to find work." I found a job for her as a waitress and I washed dishes at the same place. We worked long enough to pay our way to visit our cousin and to get there we had to cross the Columbia River in a boat to get to Astoria. In the meantime, our boyfriends came down from Battle Ground and we didn't know it. As we boarded one train going south, those boys

had in a "Frazier" axle grease box. Ha! Little did I think then that I would marry a Frazier! I stayed at Sublimity about a year, working at whatever I could. That fall, I worked at different places; in homes, hotels, picking hops and then went back to Midvale and helped in the hay the next summer. Then Brother Cassie and I went to Battle Ground, Washington to visit some cousins; the Mort Potter family. When we got there our cousin Alice and her boyfriend were going to a dance at La Center, Washington, and wanted us to go with them. I went with Alice and her boyfriend in his buggy. Cassie didn't have a way to go but Alice's brother, Oliver, had a horse and he told Cassie he might borrow a horse from the neighbors. Then he laughed and said, "They are all wild. None of them have ever been ridden." Cassie said, "Oh, that don't make any difference." So he went out to the corral and caught the first one he could get ahold of. It was about dark then and he saddled him up and rode him through the dark to La Center, and Oliver herded for him. I don't know if he bucked or not. got on the train going north and my cousin that lived in Manor was standing on the platform. The boys said, "Where are the girls?" and Herman said, "They are on that train." I don't know how they got down to the Columbia River, but they got there just as our boat pulled out for Astoria. There was an old man standing on the river bank and my boyfriend asked him if he could get them to Astoria before the train left and told him if he could he would give him \$5.00. The old man said he would go, so Clarence, my boyfriend, gave him the money. As they were getting out of the boat, our train pulled out and they had to stay all night in Astoria. We changed trains at Megler to go on a branch line to my cousins, and our new boyfriends and we girls went back up to Megler the next morning to catch the train to Seaside and, of course, we had to catch the train that came down from Astoria. When we got on the train with our new

boyfriends, there were our boyfriends from Battle Ground following us. I wanted to sink through the floor, but they just grinned, and we let on like we didn't know them. We didn't tell our new friends and those boys followed us around all day acting silly. They didn't get too close and our new boyfriends didn't catch on. Then Alice and our old boyfriends went back to Battle Ground.

I went back to Midvale and got a job of work. Brother Cassie and I got a job working for Johnny Kimbro, a sheep man from Weiser. He had his sheep over on Big Flat, about 40 miles east of Midvale. There were just three of working for him. Guy Logan from Indian Valley took care of the sheep nearby, brother Cassie put in the crop and I did the cooking. Guy was supposed to stay at camp with the sheep but he came down to the ranch once in a while for supper. I think it was more to give me a bad time, and he and my brother sure did that! One time my boyfriend, Willis Waterman, left his violin for me to take care of when he went out on a job. I had lots of time on my hands that I didn't know what to do with, so I thought I would try to play the violin. I got so I could play a few pieces, after a fashion, but I made the mistake of telling the boys and they said, "O.K., we want to hear you play." I said, "No. I won't play for you until I can play so you can tell what I am playing." Cassie said, "You will play tonight!" After supper, my brother sat three chairs in a row and slammed me down in the middle chair and Guy sat on one side of me and Cassie on the other side and Cassie said, "Now play!" I said I wouldn't do it, so he said, "All right" and he took a plug of tobacco out of his pocket, took a chew and he handed it over to Guy and he took a chew. Then Cassie said, "You can have your choice; you can play or we will spit tobacco juice all over you." They made me play "Turkey in the Straw", "Casey Jones", and "The Devil's

While we lived at Midvale, my two

Dream."

Another time we were having an awful cold rain and sleet storm in the spring of the year. Those two huskies caught me and held me past the corner of the house where I got the full force of the storm, while they stood around the corner of the house where they were sheltered. But I got even with my brother. He saddled up his mare that we called "Old Liz". She would buck every time he got on her. The time she got the bridle off and I was standing in the lane that led past the house and he yelled for me to head her off. I just stood there and laughed at him. I knew I could stop her and my sister was there and it made her mad. She said, "Why didn't you head her off? She might have killed him!" I said, "Well, I just wanted to see if he could ride her." But he did and she ran for a bunch of horses that he wanted to corral and it scared them as she was still bucking. They ran for the creek. The bank was high and they all went over the bank; Cassie, Old Liz, and all! Then he managed to get the bridle back on, but he had to ride her along ways up the creek to get out.

He used to say "Such is life in the far west and we live in the last house." When we got through there I went back to Midvale where my home was. Sister Etta was up from Sublimity on a visit and I wanted to go as far as Weiser with her on her way home. I got ready to go to the train and Dad yelled and asked me if I would have time to run the calves. They got out and were about to get to the cows. I jumped on a high lified mare and was leaning over, running her as hard as she would run and she lit into bucking and bucked me off. I got up and grabbed the reins and said, "Well, I will ride you!" Dad yelled at me to stay off her. He had a board in his hand and every time she would start to buck he would give her a rap with that board, and she gave up. I brushed the dirt off of my dress and went to Weiser. brothers, Cassie, Riley, and I would talk

some of our friends into going to New Meadows and Payette Lakes, Idaho for an outing and my oldest brother, Riley, brother Cassie, Joe Hood, Ida Sherman, and I went to New Meadows. Riley and Joe took a team and camping outfit. Cassie, Ida, and I rode our saddle horses. (It was 60 miles from Midvale to New Meadows.)

Another time, Ed Sherman and family, Merle Denton, Dock Tupper and I, all of Midvale, and Minnie Lock from Crane Creek all when to New Meadows. We went through Squaw Creek and Ed took a team and wagon with a camping outfit to Long Valley. I went to Crane Creek and got Minnie and we caught up with them before they got to Squaw Creek. We rode our saddle horses all the way. We camped at Lewis Thompson's the first night, between Squaw Creek and the Payette River, and our horses were pretty tired. When we got to the Payette River they were wet with sweat so Minnie and I took them down the river to wash them off. While we were there, two boys and their girlfriends were riding down the river in a boat and Minnie and I were watching them. One of the boys yelled, "Rubber neck!" and I yelled back and said, "Rub her neck yourself, you're the closest to her." It made him mad and he said, "You little son-of-a gun!" They went on down the river. We had a good laugh and they didn't like it a bit.

The next night we camped in the upper end of Long Valley and went on to New Meadows the next day. We camped there a week and I got acquainted with the Carry boys, Tom and Ray. They took us to the dances every night that week.

One time when we were in New Meadows, brother Riley and Joe Hood from Midvale, were there, too. (Ida Sherman and I were there together.) We girls were on our

The Midvale bunch were always playing tricks on their friends. One time, Paul and Beryl Williams, and several other boys - I can't recollect who they were - but Windsor Pickett was one of them. The boys

saddle horses waiting for them to come from the store or saloon. The boys didn't tie the team they were driving as Joe, (the owner) left them any place and they'd be at the same place when he came back. But this time it was different. There was a big bear tied in the alley and the horses got a whiff of it and away they went, wagons and all. We had cooking utensils, frying pans, etc. in the wagon and all the pans made so much noise as they ran down the street. Brother Cassie was at the other end of the street talking to his girlfriend and he jumped on his horse and headed them off. On that same trip, Cassie, Ida Sherman, and I were out for a horseback ride and they tried to run off and leave me. They got ahead of me before I noticed what they were up to and I let my horse out and it must have made him made because they were in the lead, and he flew the track and ran as hard as he could, jumping everything in his path. My foot went through the stirrup and I knew I had to stay with him or get drug, so I rode him. I am not bragging as I was used to riding.

One time, while living in Midvale, Cassie, Riley, and their friend Joe Hood, wanted to play a joke on us girls. The girls were Ida Sherman, Gertrude Charlton of Midvale, and myself. Riley told Dad we were going to raid Johnnie Ader's watermelon patch and for him to tell Johnnie to be out with the shotgun. As we were in the patch, Johnnie shot up into the air. It about scared Ida to death and I laughed and said, "Oh, he wouldn't shoot anybody!" Joe Hood yelled, "Oh, he got me!" and Riley called out, "Don't shoot again Johnny, you got one guy." Everyone laughed and Johnnie invited us into the house for watermelon. After we got inside, I looked at Ida and she was as white as a sheet! Joe was her boyfriend. took him to the undertaking parlor and laid him on some boards and laid a sheet over him as he was supposed to be dead. They then went to the drug store and told the undertaker that Paul Williams shot a guy

and they wanted him to come and identify the body. When the undertaker lifted the sheet, Windsor threw off the sheet and screamed and the undertaker ran backwards and was about scared stiff. I think that undertaker's name was Sloan. There are not many left for me to ask as most of those folks have passed away at this time (1974). I am 86 and getting so I can't recollect names.

Another time when Riley, Joe Hood, Ida Sherman and I were at Payette Lakes and we took in the ball games and horse races in the daytime and the dances at night, the same as we did at New Meadows. The boys ran my horse in the race, and as they were running down the track, some of them were ahead of my horse. I noticed he was running with his nose sideways, and I knew his rider was holding him back. I was furious and yelled as loud as I could, "Let him run!" I knew he wasn't running free. He always stuck his nose straight out when he was running his best. I found out later my brothers were betting on the horse ahead of him! Was I ever mad!

Another time at Midvale, my boyfriend and I, and his sister and her boyfriend, Jim Kilburn, were riding home from town and he had told me before that he had a horse that could outrun mine. I said, "Well, I won't say that he can't, but I will have to be showed." As we came to a straight place in the road he started his horse out in a trot. I didn't urge my horse, but just kept letting him out enough to keep

Another time when brother Cassie was on Crane Creek, he and his close friend, Bill Wicks, took a notion to dress up silly and one of them dressed like a woman. He padded his breasts and wore a big bustle. They were driving a team and buggy and every time they passed a house or saw someone they would hug and kiss just to make people talk. And they did! One woman told it to everybody she saw. One of them was her nephew, but she didn't know it. It started raining and the lightning

even. When he saw he couldn't outrun me he spurred his horse and the horse lit into bucking and ran into a telephone post. The impact knocked them both down. His face was bleeding and he was groggy. By that time, his sister and her boyfriend rode up and we got him loose from the horse. My Aunt saw the race and said, "That girl is going to get someone killed." I had to laugh because all the boys but brother Cassie was older than I was. That ended my racing. I wouldn't race the girls or the younger boys.

One time I was visiting my sister, Etta Branch, on Crane Creek, about 30 miles from home. I started home on afternoon and there had been a cloudburst up Indian Valley way and it flooded Crane Creek, the creek I had to cross. I was about 15 miles from my sisters' and I didn't want to go back, so I thought I would ford the creek as the bridge was condemned. My horse put his head down and sniffed the water and snorted, but wouldn't cross it. I thought he must smell danger, so I took the planks down and crossed on the bridge. I got home about 11:00 o'clock that night and my folks told me a Crane Creek family forded the creek and the water was so high and swift that it floated the wagon box off and down the creek. They had quite a few groceries, as it was so far to Midvale, and when they did make a trip to town they bought enough to last several weeks. The man and his wife got out O.K., but I don't recollect if they saved the team or not.

was flashing everywhere, and a ball of fire hit right in front of their team and it knocked one horse down, and stunned the boys for a few seconds. I have often thought (If it wouldn't be so sad) it would have been funny if they had been killed and someone found them lying there dead, dressed like that. I don't think I could have kept from laughing!

About this time people started buying cars. If I am not mistaken, Carl Fletcher of Midvale bought the first car, and

later, Auz See, who lived on Crane Creek bought one. The first time he drove into Midvale, there was only one other car on the street and he hit it! We all had a good laugh over that one. The Bill Reavis bought one and he was driving up the alley and met someone and instead of putting his foot on the brake, he just pulled back on the steering wheel and yelled, "Whoa, whoa!"

Then in a few years I got married and started raising a family. I married Clyde Frazier of Payette, Idaho. We had a family of eight children, three boys and five girls. We lived the first few years at Midvale and made good, but my husband took a notion to go to Tennessee. We lived there one year and almost went broke. We had enough money to get to Magnolia, Iowa, where his sister lived. In two years we were back in Payette, Idaho. We lived in the Payette valley several years and then in 1938, moved to Kooskia, Idaho. In 1943 we bought a little farm in Kamiah, Idaho. We lived there until 1950. All the children were married then but the two youngest, Norris and Delpha. Delpha went to college in Lewiston. Norris married and settled down in Kamiah. After graduation, Delpha started teaching school. Later she taught on the mission field in Africa.

While living in Kooskia, on Tahoe Ridge, I entered my first fiddler's contest in Grangeville, Idaho and won first place. I now have 12 trophies up to this year, 1974. I have played at Weiser, Idaho; Seattle and Spokane, Washington; Baker, Spray, and Heppner, Oregon, among other places. A bus load of us fiddlers (and sister Opal) went to the World's Fair in Seattle. We played in a theater there that held 3,000 people and the place was packed. We had a jam session first when we all played at the same time, then each of us fiddlers had to play three pieces alone with accompanist. Wendell Ader accompanied me on the guitar, and Glen Uhrig of Crane Creek played the bull fiddle.

ADDENDUM: Gladys Potter Frazier passed from this life on April 30, 1980. She would have been 92 in May of that year. She had appeared at the National Old Time Fiddler's contest in Weiser, Idaho several years, receiving the trophy for being the oldest fiddler several times. She died peacefully in her sleep still retaining her wonderful sense of humor until the very end.
