

Memoirs of Ruby Partin Long (A Pelham Valley Story)

Submitted by Jackie Layne Partin

(Ruby Anna Mae Partin Long, born 1916-died 2003, was a daughter of William Harrison “Willie” and Octavia “Tavy” Goodman Partin. She was a sister to Grady Edward Partin, Lottie Partin Bell, Douglas Partin and Roy Partin. I found this little booklet containing her memoirs in one of my notebooks, and upon rereading it, I was assured that there was material in it for sharing. With corrections for clarity, italics to furnish names, added photos for interest and permission from her family, I present the memoirs as she wrote them. Jackie)



Ruby Anna Mae Partin Long



William Harrison “Willie” Partin and his new bride
Octavia “Tavy” Goodman Partin

I was born in the old Bell House in **Bells Cove**, Tennessee, where my mother always said the wind would whistle through the cracks. Our heat was a fireplace where you burned on one side and froze on the other.

I was playing out in the yard as a small toddler, and Mama found me turning blue, so she grabbed me up and ran her finger down my throat and dislodged a cocklebur. I was bad about putting things into my mouth. My neighbor told me that she found me with pieces of pretty glass trying to chew it. They wiped my mouth out, and I was none the worse for it.

While I was rather young, we moved to **Alto** where my brother **Grady** and sister **Lottie** started to school. I was about four at the time, and I begged to go with them saying, “I am plenty big enough to go to school.” When I was five, they let me start to school, and I don’t think I’ve ever enjoyed anything as much all through life as going to school and learning new things, especially arithmetic. My brother Grady taught me the multiplication tables as we

walked to school. I soon learned them through the 12's. I guess that was the key to enjoying math.



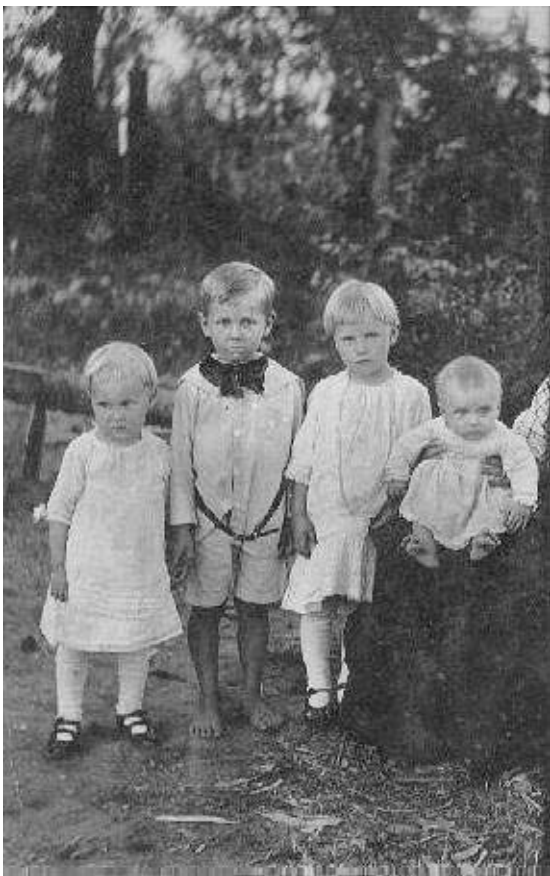
Oak Grove School in Alto—#1Charlotte “Lottie” Partin and her brother #2 Grady Edward Partin

My mother thought **Pelham** had the best school around, so we went there. We lived at **Bell's Mill** where Daddy was a farmer and miller for **Mr. Summer Bell**. He ground water-ground meal at Bell's Mill, and people would come from far and near to have their corn ground. I liked to watch Daddy sharpen the large round stones so that they would grind better. A dam stretched across **Elk River** and formed a millpond that generated the force to turn the stones. Sometimes Daddy would shut the water gate and catch a big fish or two then we would have a feast. Fish out of fresh water are so much better than the ones from a lake or pond.

People would come from **Monteagle** and **Tracy City** to swim in the **Mill Pond**. We didn't have country clubs with swimming pools out in the country at that time, so our Mill Pond was very popular. My sister and I were not allowed to go bathing because our parents thought those skimpy suits were indecent for girls. One of the local men wouldn't let his daughters wear bathing suits, but he spent a lot of time girl watching at the river. In contrast, my brothers learned to swim in a swimming hole down the river where they could go in wearing their old overalls. But most of the time we were too busy working in the home or fields to take time for such foolishness.

During the warm days, there were always people camping on the river. It was exciting for us; when they would leave, we would rush to the campsite to see if they had left anything. A few times a valuable item was found that we saved for them when they returned, but most of the time we would find nothing—maybe an old pan or skillet they had thrown away.

I don't remember how we got them started, but we had about twenty white tame ducks. They would swim all day in the river, but when it began to get dark, they would march home and go in a shed where they would be fed. My brothers would shut the door until the next morning at which time the door would be opened, and they would file out to the river again. It was fun to see how many eggs they had laid during the night. I didn't think they were as good to eat; the yolk was much redder than hen eggs, but Mama used them to cook with. She made the richest and best cakes of anyone. She was a good cook, and she saw that we had plenty to eat. She picked black berries and canned them. We always had a good garden.



L to R: Ruby, Grady Edward, Lottie and baby Douglas



Tavy Goodman Partin—1891-1975

She couldn't stand dirt or germs, so she was continually scrubbing floors or boiling utensils as well as clothing. She taught us not to drink after one another or anyone else. She saw that we had a balanced meal of vegetables, fruit, and meat that was mostly chicken or fish. We didn't have electricity, so beef and pork were not available unless someone butchered it and peddled it throughout the community.

We would cure hams, bacon, etc. Many times we would run out before the season was over, so Mama would fry chicken for breakfast. She would chop up Irish potatoes in small pieces and fry them for breakfast. We didn't know we were having hash brown potatoes. Mostly though, for other meals, she would boil vegetables and meat; therefore, you could eat all you wanted, but you didn't gain weight. Another thing, we always had two good milk cows that we would take about two miles both ways to the pasture. Count that in with milking, so there was no way of getting fat in those days.

It was only about a mile to **Pelham School** from where we lived if we crossed the river and went through the woods. We had a neighbor boy and girl who walked with us, so we really enjoyed the walk. I sometimes wonder how we ever got to school on time. We would look for wild flowers, berries, or anything new. Seems like it rained more back then, and there would be ice all winter, so we would always find places to skate as we went along.

Two years of high school was taught at the school, so we had some grown boys and girls. They would dig a place on the playground and pour water on it at night. The next morning it would be frozen over and would afford skating to their hearts' content. My sister (**Lottie**) really had a time. She had worn her Sunday dress to school. Being athletic, she had to get in there and skate right along with the rest. Her feet slipped out from under her, and her dress was muddy all over the back. She cried because she thought it was ruined, but one of the girls helped her wash it out.



Charlotte Elizabeth "Lottie" Partin Bell

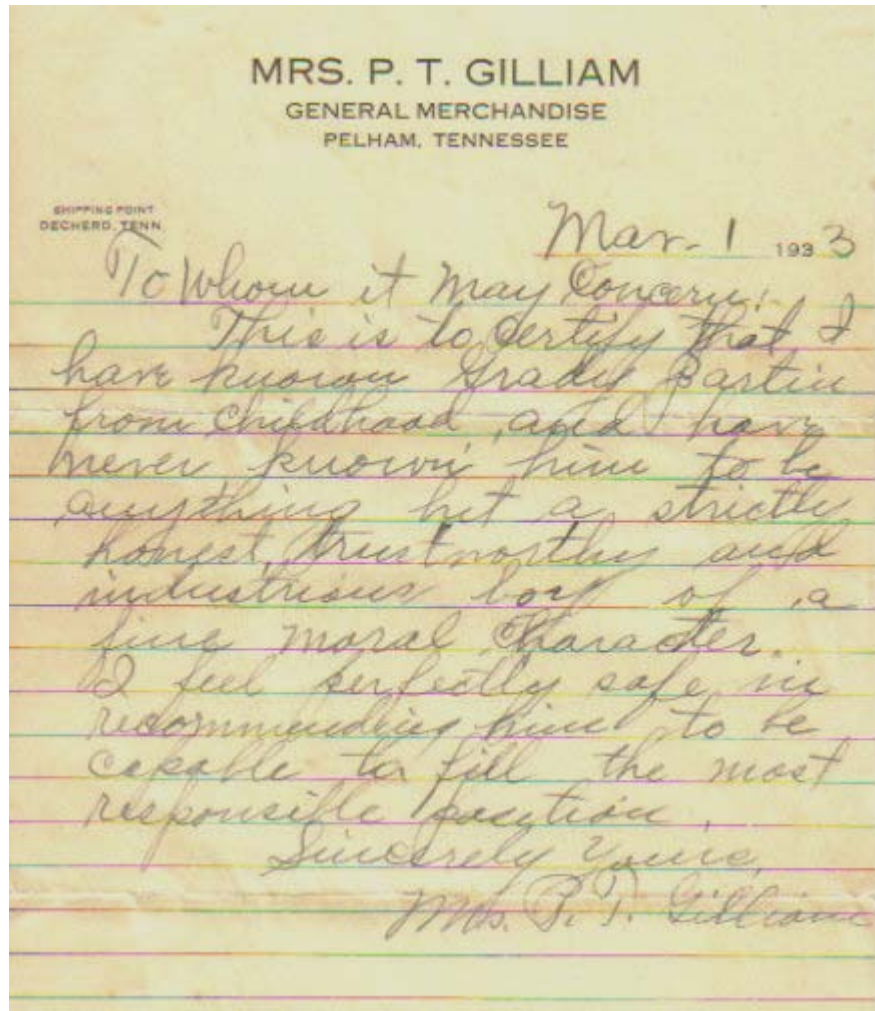


L to R: Roy Elbert, Grady Edward, Willie Douglas Partin

We had a mare named **Queen**. She was a wonderful little horse. During the winter we would ride her to school sometimes. Daddy would rent a stable in Pelham from **Mr. Leif Henson**. Three of us rode—my brother (**Douglas**) on front, I would be in the middle, and my sister (**Lottie**) who was a little older would ride sideways on the back. I don't know how she

stayed on. When we got off at the barn, our feet would be so cold we could hardly walk. My sister's feet got frostbite, and she still has trouble with them when they get cold.

Mrs. Grace Gilliam (*Mrs. P. T. Gilliam*) had what we thought was a large general merchandise store with a large cast iron stove. She always had chairs around it where we could sit and warm our feet. Then we would walk the rest of the way to school. I will never forget the pretty decorations and gifts at Christmas. It was a wonder to look at to us kids.



In 1933 Mrs. P. T. Gilliam (Grace) wrote this letter of recommendation for Grady Edward Partin.

One day while we were at school, it came a flood, and the river got out of its banks. Daddy had fixed a foot log for us to walk across on and had a wire stretched for us to hold to. Most of the time it was several feet down to the water, but that day the water was touching the log and rushing under it. We managed to cross to the other side. Mama was standing on the other side watching. She couldn't swim, so if we had fallen in, she would have jumped in, and we would all have drowned.

Sometimes the water getting up over the road pleased us. When our cousins, **Paul** and **Alice** (*children of Orville and Allie Goodman Partin*), would be visiting us, they couldn't get home, so we would hope the river wouldn't go down.

One afternoon when we got across the river on **Queen**, **Grady** was going to help Daddy, so **Lottie** talked Daddy into letting us ride the mare to the barn. He put us on, and I was riding behind holding to Lottie. We would have been okay, I guess, but Lottie stopped at a little tree and broke off a little switch. Of course, Queen took off pretty fast, and Lottie says she got scared and turned loose. She fell off, and of course, I went with her. When I came to, I was at home in the bed. My brother **Douglas** used to kid me and say that I hit my head when I fell and I had been addled ever since.



Orville and Allie Blair Goodman Partin with the two oldest children Paul and Alice



Douglas Partin with his nephew Grady Ward Partin out for a goat ride

Everywhere we went we would have to ride in a wagon. None of us minded it except Mama who had a side that bothered her. She always said it made her side hurt worse. Daddy always wanted to buy things for us if he could, so he bought a buggy, and we really rode in style.

I remember when my youngest brother was born. We had spent the night with **Aunt Allie** (*Alabama Nancy Patton Blair*). Daddy came after us in the buggy. He said, "You girls have been wanting a doll to play with, so now you have one," and we sure did. **Roy** was the prettiest baby I ever saw. I never got tired of swinging or rocking him. He was always good and never cried.



“Aunt Allie” and “Uncle Mart” Blair



Roy Partin holding his niece Jane Partin; Right: Tavy Partin

We had to go through what we called **Negro Town** as we went to school. There were several black families. They were always nice and friendly. There was one black lady who was blind. She washed clothes for the white folks in **Pelham**. It was strange. She could separate the white clothes from the colored. She would have each pile to itself. She would call out to us as we went by, “Is that **Tavie’s** children?” When we answered, she would say, “Come closer so that I can tell how tall you are.” They had a nice white schoolhouse that was also the church. Their teacher would come from another community. I remember one in particular. She was a beautiful light-colored black lady.

One of the black families, **Ed Williams**, worked for **Mr. (John) Brashear**, a prosperous farmer of the community who also had a blacksmith shop, etc. **Mr. Williams** had eight girls (*Pauline, Josephine, Georgia, Tommie and Elma were five of the children*). They were pretty and smart. I have heard that they all graduated from college and did well. **Mr. Brashear’s** son **Ellis** married and moved to Georgia. He became an evangelist. One summer he came back to **Pelham** to hold a revival in the white **Methodist Church**. The black minister invited him to hold a meeting for them in their church. He preached there for a week or more. The house would be full of both races. I never will forget; I went every night. The black minister would lead his congregation in a song. Talk about singing; it was better than the gospel singing we hear on television or radio.

Miss Esther Brashear was a teacher in **Pelham**. She always said that my brother **Grady** was the smartest person she ever taught. Grady was a wonderful brother. He was always a leader. He never fussed about having to work. He started when he was barely able to reach the handles on the double shovel plow. He never argued with his brothers and sisters. The rest of us argued and fussed, but he never did. When he left home and went to work in Nashville, I had such a lonely feeling—the worst feeling I ever had until the first death we had in the family—**Douglas’** little ten-year-old girl (*Jane Partin*). I’ll tell about her further on.



Left: Ruby with her “wonderful brother” Grady and her sister Lottie.



Right: Douglas’ daughter Jane with Lottie’s son Lanny Bell

One time when **Grady** was still at home, **Paul**, our cousin, was there, and they caught a young soft-shelled turtle. They dressed it, and we children decided to eat it. They built a fire and fried it. It really looked good. It was prettier than chicken meat. But when I tried to eat it, the meat got larger and larger, and I couldn’t swallow it. The others seemed to enjoy it. Another thing I remember we would pick blackberries, and they would send me to the house to get sugar and bowls. Then we would put a few berries in each bowl then add sugar and a little water to dissolve the sugar. It was delicious.

Douglas, my second brother, and I always were buddies because we were close together. Since we were middle children, we weren’t required to do so much. They petted us a little more than they did the two older ones. Douglas had double pneumonia when he was pretty young and fluid collected on his lungs. The doctors didn’t have the wonder drugs at that time. He was too weak to be operated on. They didn’t think he would live. But prayer and love brought him through. I would be his nurse and get him anything he needed. He laughs about me carrying the pot for him. One day while we were at school, and Daddy was in the field, **Douglas** started vomiting blood. It scared **Mama** really bad, but it happened that **Septa Henley**, our mail carrier, was going by, so Mama ran out and stopped her; she went and got ice and brought it and then called the doctor. Mama never forgot her for being so kind. We just knew he had tuberculosis or something bad, but later when he was x-rayed, there were only markings that showed he had had pneumonia. One time when he had malaria fever, he couldn’t have water, and he would beg for just five or six little sups of water. I would feel so sorry for him. Later the doctor said to give him **Coca Cola** to settle his stomach. Of course, they couldn’t buy a lot of them, so they would have to save them for him. They looked so good to me, so I said, “I wish I could get sick so I could have some of the Cola.” They all told me I should be ashamed, but I still didn’t get any. To think they were less than five cents each then, but money was hard to come by.

Daddy was a good carpenter. He built barns. Also he built cabins or motel rooms for **Uncle Elbert Goodman** (*Octavia’s brother*) at **Crossroads**. Uncle Elbert had a grocery store so by the time he (*Daddy*) got through we had eaten his pay up. Daddy would make axe handles and

bottom chairs with hickory splits. It was fun to watch him peel the hickory strips from the wood. Also he would make boards for the roofs of houses and barns. There was nothing he couldn't do.



Willie and Tavy with their five children



James Elbert Goodman with his two sisters Octavia (left) and Allie Blair and their mother Minerva Patton Patterson Goodman

When we were small, we had a pet gosling, a baby goose. It followed us everywhere we went. It would get right under our feet. I stepped on it several times. One time it followed us to the river where **Mama** was fishing from what we called the flat rock. It was about a 6 X 12 feet rock that stuck out over the river. I stepped on the gosling there, and it keeled over. I just knew it was dead, but Mama calmly picked it up, ducked it in cool water, and it was okay.

Mama could do just about everything except make dresses. We would order material from the **Sears Roebuck Catalogue** for about 5 or 10 cents a yard and hire **Mrs. Willie Wilder** to make our dresses. She made some pretty dresses for us. I remember one she made for my sister that was a beautiful wine wool crepe with a jacket effect in front over a satin bodice.

Every spring or summer we would have a children's day at church. We always tried to have a special dress for that. A **Mrs. Williams** had moved next to where we lived, so she made my dress. I guess it was the prettiest I ever had. It was pink pongee. She embroidered it and trimmed it with lace and ribbons. We would also have a time memorizing our pieces and singing our songs. **Mrs. Viola Aylor** (*wife of William Aylor*) was one of the leaders that always helped us. We had to walk about a mile to church. We would have black patent leather slippers that would be covered with dust by the time we got there, but we would dust them off before we went into the church.

One of our **Sunday School** teachers was **Mr. Bob Cox** (*husband of Lula Jacobs Cox*). He could paint pictures of the **Bible** stories by telling us about them. He could make the people come alive. He didn't have a formal education and no props or anything to work with, but he was the best I've ever seen.

Mama and **Daddy** always taught us that being honest and trustworthy was more important than wealth, and we believed it. They believed in the **Bible** and prayer. They didn't go around making a big show of what they believed, but they lived it. Someone said of my daddy, "You'll never find a more honest man." I always was very proud of my parents. They never did anything to make me ashamed.

Sometimes **Mama** would fry a chicken for our school lunch. We all three ate out of the same box. **Lottie** and I would give **Grady** the best piece of the chicken because we loved him and thought he should have the best. One time Grady and a classmate were wrestling and Lottie thought the other boy was getting the best of him, so she picked up a small piece of wood and threw it. It hit him in the back. He jumped up and wanted to know who had hit him. Lottie was pretty scared, but he didn't think of it being a girl, I guess.

Dr. Bowden came to the school to give us exercise. He would give it the first thing of a morning. Of course, we had just walked to school, but we got in the line up. We were turning our head to the right and to the left when I passed out. They picked me up and put me on a bench in **Miss Esther Brashear's** room. I never will forget this good-looking older boy who came and wanted to know how the little girl was. I felt very flattered. Another time we were picking blackberries. I usually ate more than I picked, but I was hot and I stuck one of the thorns in my finger. It bled a little and down I went. They had to take me home. I felt bad about causing trouble because the berries meant a lot. **Mama** canned them. Sometimes in the winter she would open a can and heat it with homemade butter and sugar. Putting that over biscuits was really good.

We had some geese. The old gander would run at you and hiss and carry on and scare me to death. One time he got a bite of my leg and almost wrung a chunk out of it. The geese laid large eggs about like three hen eggs put together. They were good; they tasted more like hen eggs too. But most of the time **Mama** would let the goose set on them so they would hatch more. She would pick their feathers and make feather beds and pillows.

We had straw beds. Whenever they threshed wheat, we would always fill our bed ticks with fresh straw. The straw would smell so good. One time, we were filling them up, and we had a pet chicken. We kept hearing it chirp, but we couldn't see it. We discovered that it had jumped into the straw tick when we weren't looking, and it was in the straw bed. Needless to say, we got it out.

It was really a chore to make up the beds of a morning with that straw tick and a feather bed on top. We were fortunate to have featherbeds. A lot of people didn't have them. Because we

had geese and ducks, we had a lot of nice feathers. It was very interesting to watch Mama pluck the feathers from the goose's under side, where the softest feathers were at certain times of the year. Some people made their pillows out of chicken feathers, I've heard. I'm sure they were not nearly as nice and soft.

They had home remedies for whatever ailed us. One thing was the seeds of **Jerusalem Weed**. Mama would put it in molasses candy. That was good for worms. They were always giving medicine for worms. I wonder why they don't now. Another thing, if you were constipated, you got castor oil. Finally they invented **Calotabs**. They were large tablets. I never will forget when we all decided to take one. We all got ours down, except **Douglas**. He couldn't swallow his. He was better off than the rest because they gave you such a working out until you were very weak the next day. Mama was a great believer in **Black Draught** because you could take a little of it at a time.

If we took a real bad cold or flu, **Mama** would take a flannel cloth and put coal oil, turpentine, and grease on it and then pin it over our chest. It did the trick. We got better. I remember that we all took the measles except **Roy**. Mama really had a time waiting on us. She said we would all want a drink at the same time.

We had a chicken incubator. It held one hundred eggs. I never will forget **Daddy** would pull the drawer out that held all the eggs, and he would patiently turn each egg of a morning. Then, that night, they had to be turned the other way. If Daddy had to be in the field or something, **Mama** did it. They had to be sure their hands were very clean. If they got a little grease on them, they wouldn't hatch. The incubator was heated with hot water that ran around and under. It was kept warm with an oil lamp. We had to be very careful not to let the lamp go out or the eggs would chill. We also had a thermometer to watch so they wouldn't get too hot. The best part of it all was when they started hatching. They would come to the little glass door and peck on it.

When we were in the seventh grade, **Daddy** went to a sale and bought a sewing machine and said, "Now I'm not hiring any more dresses made. You girls will have to learn to sew." As luck would have it, a teacher came to **Pelham** and taught a sewing class. She was really good; she taught us how to use a pattern and, I'm here to tell you, we made dresses. I never will forget mine. It was made out of green print and trimmed in solid green material. The bodice came down almost to the knees. The skirt was flared and had green points all around it. We must have cut it on the bias. It also had a strip down one side of the front that had points. I think I had the prettiest dress in the class. I wore that dress until it wore out. I liked it so well. Then we really had fun picking out material and patterns from the **Sears Catalogue**. I enjoyed sewing so much. Of course, it was hard too; my legs would get tired of treading the machine. The faster you treaded, the faster the stitches would go.

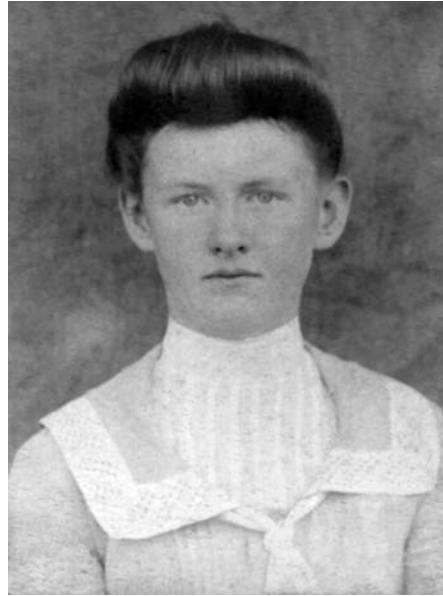
I only remember one grandmother, Grandma Goodman (*Minerva Elizabeth Patton Patterson Goodman*). She had broken up housekeeping a good many years before. She had

nothing in the way of valuables. But she was always cheerful and in a good mood. She lived around with friends and relatives. She was very small, had blue eyes and long black hair that came down to her waist. She kept it platted and wound in a large bun at the back of head. She always wore a little apron that had a pocket. We were always interested in what she kept in that pocket. She would keep a thimble, thread and needle and a little pocketknife with a few other things. She was always piecing quilts. She would start out with large pieces of material and make large quilt patterns. Then as the pieces got smaller she would make smaller patterns. Finally she would get down to what she called a string quilt. She would cut a square out of a page of an old **Sears Catalogue**; then she would place one of the larger pieces in a corner then put a piece across it with the right sides down. She would make the seam then bring that piece down where the seam didn't show. She would keep on until she had that square of paper covered. She would trim the material to fit the paper square. After she got through, she would tear the paper off. By putting four blocks together and having the strips turned certain ways, a pretty block would show up. She sometimes set the quilt together with strips of solid cloth. She also crocheted. She would make little capes by crocheting.

One day we discovered she had a hole in the lobe of one ear. It had been pierced to wear an earring. We thought that was so funny. She would stick a broom straw through it. We thought of her as being real old and couldn't imagine her ever being young. She had been born into a well-to-do family but became an orphan when her mother and father died. She and her sisters went to live with another relative who later died. They were then brought to **Pelham** to live with relatives. She had three sisters and a brother. The brother stayed in **Alabama**. (See *Four Little Patton Girls* at <http://www.grundycountyhistory.org/index.html>.)

When we went to school at **Pelham**, if they had a revival at either one of the churches, we would march to the church, which wasn't very far from the school. During one service, the minister, **Brother Adams**, gave the invitation. My **Grandmother** was there, and she came to my sister and me and asked us if we didn't want to accept **Christ**. We did. I was eleven at the time. There were about ten or twelve young people who came to Christ that day. I think it was **Mrs. Carden** who asked that Brother Adams play and sing, *The Ninety and Nine*. Two or three of her grandchildren were in the group of converts. We later joined the **Methodist Church**. The meeting would last for two weeks sometimes. The **Church of Christ** was right across from the school, so when their services started, we went there too.

My Daddy's mother (*Nancy Patterson Partin*) died when he was sixteen. He had three younger brothers (*Roy, Buford and George Leslie*), and he had to do the cooking for them until they all got grown. Later, Grandpa Partin married again, and Mrs. Betty (*Betty Laxson Clemons Partin*) became our Grammy. We loved her. They had a boy (*John Reginal Partin*) and girl (*Emily Edna Partin*) about our age, so we really had a lot of fun visiting them. We lived at **Providence** at that time.



Nancy Patterson Partin (1856-1906)

One Sunday after church, a big bunch of us got a picnic lunch and walked up the mountain above **Partin's Spring**. We found a lot of pretty rocks, trees, etc. We found what they called a balanced rock—a big rock as large as a one-room cabin sitting up on some smaller rocks. Someone had fixed a ladder up to it. Of course, most of them climbed the ladder and got on top. The big coward “me” was afraid to climb it. We had a big time, but we were real tired when we started back down the mountain. We had about a mile or more to walk to get home.

While we were living in **Alto**, **Daddy** stuck a thorn in his knee. He didn't think anything about it until it began to get sore. Mama kept trying to get him to go to the doctor, but he thought he would be okay until it became so inflamed that he agreed. A cousin, **Daniel Patterson**, came and took him to **Manchester** to **Dr. Farrar**. He operated and got the piece of thorn out and put a tube in to drain the poison out. Daddy wasn't able to work for several weeks and our farm work had to be carried on. **Homer Ikard**, his sisters **Pinky** and **Fannie**, **Louise Blair** and her brother, **Frankie Mae** and **Ed Ikard** and others came and helped us get our cotton out and others did farming too. There have never been better neighbors.

Lottie and I were able to go back to High School. We had been out for two or three weeks. The teachers were good. They let us outline what we had been over, and we passed all the tests. I was on the honor roll. My sister and I had a hard time going to high school. We didn't have very many clothes. Some of them we would wash at night to dry while we were asleep. This was during the depression, just before **Franklin Roosevelt** was elected. He put people to work. Daddy got a job working on the road. They built schools and did a lot of things with **WPA** work. Instead of paying them welfare, they worked for wages. They did a lot of work in the community that really helped out. I'm sure we had a hard time, but we were young and our parents had the responsibility and that made a difference.

They organized **CCC** camps where the young boys could go and work. They did all sorts of work for the country. They would draw so much by the month. They would send part of that to

their parents for them to help buy food for the rest of the family. I wrote a boy that was in the camp. I think he was the first boy who ever wrote to me. A girl on the school bus got mad at me because she thought he was her boyfriend. She was about to slap me, but my sister said, “You had better leave her alone.” We always took up for one another.

After we finished high school, **Grady** wanted us to come to **Nashville** to work. **Lottie** went first, but I stayed home to help get our cotton out and pick peas and apples for the winter. I didn’t think much about it, but **Mama** said later that she felt sorry because I had worked so hard. I made a wine-colored satin dress. It was pretty. I put pleats around the bottom of the skirt and at the cuffs. I also had a hat the same color that I had ordered. I felt really dressed up. I had begun to go with a boy from **Chattanooga**. He later got a car, and we really had a good time riding around.

After we got the cotton picked, etc., I went to **Nashville** to get a job during **Christmas**. **Lottie** had taken the luggage with her, so **Daddy** found a box and wrapped it up with my clothes inside and tied it up with twine string and fixed a handle of twine for me to carry it with. He had fixed it nice, but I was a little embarrassed over it. To make matters worse, when I got into Nashville, I got off at the bus station and was sitting in a little cafeteria waiting for **Grady**. When I looked around, there stood the bus driver with my box of clothes. I had forgotten and left it on the bus. I was so ashamed to say that it was mine. I ran up to him and grabbed it and put it under the seat. I don’t know whether I said, “Thank you,” or not.

I got a job in **Woolworth’s 10 Cent Store**. It was **Christmas**, and they put me on the card counter selling cards. I really had a time. The customers would pick up the cards and go through them. Then someone would want a large card, but you couldn’t find the envelope to match. The cash register—it literally scared me to death. They explained it a little and said be sure not to make a mistake. And the money, I’d never had a job, so how was I going to handle someone else’s money. Of course, right off, I punched the wrong key and had to have the floor lady to correct it. I would rather pick cotton any day. I finally got a job wrapping gift packages. I really liked that. I had all this pretty paper and ribbons to work with. I really excelled in that. They praised me all over the store.

At the end of the week, we got **our** money in a little envelope. I’m sure it was less than \$15, but **Lottie** and I felt rich. In a few weeks the Christmas rush was over so we came home. They didn’t need us. While we were in **Nashville**, we stayed with **Mr. and Mrs. Lemons**. She was the best cook, and they treated us so nice. It was really something to go to the table and eat and not have to worry about getting it ready, etc. Mrs. Lemons was a wonderful person. She had two married daughters who lived there, and one of them helped her cook. Mr. Lemons worked in a grocery store. One of the sons-in-law ran a grocery store, and the other one worked with the electric company. Mr. And Mrs. Lemons had a daughter who wasn’t married who lived with them also. She had a job with **Woolworth** also.

When it came time for us to come home, they acted sorry to see us leave. Mrs. Lemons had made a Christmas cake with a lot of layers with all sorts of fruit on it and in it. She wouldn't let us leave until we ate a slice of that cake. **Grady** didn't lose his job. He was working with **H. G. Payne Co.** His job didn't have anything to do with Christmas. They sold paint and supplies.

When he did come home, he brought all of us **Christmas** gifts. How we enjoyed him being with us. He brought **Lottie** a wool coat. She was so pretty in it. It was beige and had a fur collar. I bet it took him months to pay for it. And you know, I wasn't jealous for her getting it. I remember being glad for her to have it. I always thought she deserved everything she got.

I got a job as secretary to the **County Health Director, Dr. U. B. Bowden.** I was so excited to be working, making \$50 a month. The first payday I got, I went to **Winchester** and bought a new outfit—suit, blouse, bag, shoes and hat. We wore hats then. I rode the **Greyhound** bus to **Chattanooga.** My boyfriend met me and took me to **Uncle Roy's** where I spent the night. The next day, my friend came, and we saw all the sights around Chattanooga. Then he brought me home Sunday. I had a great time. He was one of the most handsome boys you'll ever see. He was 6' 4" and had blue eyes and brown, wavy hair.

That **Christmas,** I bought my boyfriend a nice scarf, and he bought me a beautiful pearl dresser set, a pretty brush, comb and mirror. On **Valentine's Day** he sent me a large heart-shaped box full of candy. He took me to see all of his relatives on both sides. We visited his mother's grave; she had died when he was quite young. He had a stepmother. He respected her, but he missed his mother from the way he talked. He talked of marriage, but somehow I could never go along with the idea. I enjoyed being with him and going places, but that was all. One day, I wrote and told him how I felt. I was told that he cried. But, I don't think he felt too bad because I soon heard that he was married. I sure missed the rides and the attention.

Then I met **Dean (Long).** I knew right away that he was the one. He was working for his brother-in-law who was in the grocery and gas business. He lived close to my uncle. So I would spend the night with **Uncle Buford,** and Dean would come down to get me to go for a drive. We lived at **Bells Mill.** One day I came home from work and was tired. I went upstairs and lay down. In a little while, I heard **Dean** say, "Is **Ruby** home?" I got up and hollered, "Wait Dean, I'll go with you." I was so afraid that Mama would say that I wasn't feeling well. Then I was a little embarrassed when I realized that he hadn't said anything about going anywhere. He was sweet though and didn't seem to think anything about it, so we went riding.

When my sister and I were in our teens the way we would ride to a revival meeting in another community would be in a wagon with a hay frame on it. The frame would extend out over the sides of the wagon to hold the hay, thus providing a good seat for us to sit on. There would be at least a dozen or more of the young people going. My sister was very pretty, and the boys were beginning to pay attention to her. I remember one time in particular that her

boyfriend was going with us. As we drove along, the man driving stopped to pick up someone walking, and it was **Daddy**. He had come along to chaperone us.

There at **Bells Mill** was less than a mile to the main route from North to South. A lot of times people would come through, and we would feed them and put them up for the night. The **Army** would come through. One time in particular, the **Cavalry** came through. We didn't count the horses, but they rode by our house all day long going to the river to water their horses. One horse threw one of the soldiers, and he broke his arm.

Many times **Gypsies** would come through, and camp at **Uncle Elbert Goodman's**. They would come by our house and would want chickens or vegetables. **Mama** was about half afraid of them. They would talk real fast and in a different language. Mama would let them have whatever they wanted. I've heard Mama tell about a group admiring my sister. They would look at her and gesture, talking a lot. Mama was so afraid they were going to kidnap her. But they didn't, of course.

Talking about the people spending the night with us, an old lady stayed with us one night. She got to talking about the **Germans** and had a picture showing something about poison gas. I was just a little girl listening in, so I went to bed very scared. The next morning Mama got up and couldn't find her shoes. This lady had a small black bag with her. Mama happened to look in it, and there were her shoes. We never knew whether she meant to steal them or couldn't see too well and got them by mistake.

MY MOTHER

(Octavia "Tavy" Goodman Partin)

My mother was one who always inspired us to rise above our surroundings. She never failed to impress upon us that it is what you are rather than what you wear. She would say, "If you do as well as you look, you'll be all right." If we complained about not having things we wanted, she would remind us that we should be proud to be the children of an honest father who had a good name if not riches. With this in mind, I always felt proud of my heritage.



Octavia Belle Goodman Partin (1891-1975)
An inspiration to her family

She and Daddy taught me to respect members of any church saying that they believed in the same **Savior** even though they worshipped a little differently from what we did. She always advocated that if we couldn't say something good about someone not to say anything. Until this day, even if I say a truthful something about someone, if it is not complimentary, I feel guilty. She hated strong drink and taught her five children to be teetotalers.

She believed in us to the utmost, never thinking that we would ever tell a falsehood. I remember when I was a child, I would wish for a ring. I don't think it would have mattered what kind just so it was a ring. So I told my sister that I had seen a pretty ring lying out on the ground, but that I didn't get it. So my sister was very dismayed and told my mother that I was telling a tall tale, which was the truth, of course. My mother said, "If she said she saw a ring, I'm sure she did." I'll never forget it. I was so ashamed that I never told another.

MY DADDY (William Harrison "Willie" Partin)

Was there ever as honest a man as he? I think not. A man once said of him, "He is not a wealthy man, but he is as honest as the day is long." He always taught us never to buy more than we could pay for. Though he had very little collateral, he never failed to be able to get someone to sign a note for him. He was always a down-to-earth kind of person and always tried to get along with everyone. It took a whole lot to make him mad, but once he got mad, he would fight a circle saw. Dean once said, "I didn't know your daddy could get that angry." He always worked hard on the farm. No job was too hard until his health got bad.



Center: An honest man Willie Partin with his son Grady Edward Partin and his wife Tavy with two grandchildren Joy Partin (left) and Elizabeth Bell



Willie and Tavy Partin's Family

Front: L to R: Jane Partin, Herman Partin, Lloyd Long, Dean Long

2nd row: Grady Ward Partin, Sylvia Long, Jimmy Bell

3rd row: Tavy Partin, Joyce Phillips Pennington (*sister to Ruth Phillips Partin*), Lanny Bell, Douglas Partin, Ruby Long, Grady Edward Partin

Willie Partin (partially unseen), Lottie Bell, Jim Bell, Ruth Partin, Agnes Partin, Roy Partin, Georgia Partin



**4 Generations: Standing: Grady Edward Partin
Seated L to R: Grady Ward Partin, Willie Partin and Stanlely Ward Partin**



**Grandchildren of Willie and Tavy Partin
Front row: Sylvia Long Garner, Elizabeth Bell, Joy Partin, Herman Partin, June Partin
Brewer, Emily Partin, Daryl Partin
Back row: Jimmy Bell, James Bell (g-grandson), Lloyd Long, Kelly Long (g-grandson),
Grady Ward Partin, Lanny Bell, Earl Partin, Edwin Partin and David Partin**

DR. BOWDEN

My most unforgettable character was **Dr. U. B. Bowden**. From childhood I had heard of Dr. Bowden, but I never really knew him until I went to work for him. Dr. Bowden had been a country doctor going about on horseback over mountains visiting this sick person and that. When I knew him, he was **County Health Director** of Grundy County and practiced medicine mostly when someone needed a doctor and didn't have the money to pay. He had a small office in **Pelham** where he, a registered nurse, and I worked.

I knew very little about office procedures when I went to work. I had only studied typing and shorthand in high school. Dr. Bowden took me to **Nashville** to visit the **State Health Department**. We visited all the different offices, and the Commissioner's secretary, **Miss Cooper**, took me to lunch. I learned a lot that day thanks to Dr. Bowden who was never too busy to explain something I didn't understand. He had a vibrant personality and would stop at nothing to get something done that he thought would benefit the most people.

During the time, typhoid and diphtheria were rampant in **Tennessee**. He visited about in different communities giving the vaccine. He even helped hold the youngsters who refused to take the shots, as they called them. He was so determined to stamp out these diseases in **Grundy**, and he really did too.

He loved adventure. It never got too foggy, snowy or too icy for him to take off up the mountain to see someone sick. He had a reputation of being a reckless driver, but I don't know. I think he drove so much that he just couldn't help having a few close calls. I remember one of the closest calls he had when I was with him. We were coming down the mountain, when he attempted to pass a car, and he saw another car approaching from the other direction. There were a car and a truck parked in front of the little restaurant on the side of the mountain. There would have been plenty of room to stop, but his brakes failed, so the only thing he could do was run between the parked car and truck. As we went between them, both door handles were knocked off. It was a close shave, but no one was hurt and the cars were damaged only slightly.

One of the freakiest accidents I was ever in was when we were checking the schools. We had finished the **Utah School** and had started off. I raised up in the seat to adjust some papers I had been writing when we came to a sudden stop. Well, **Dr. Bowden** began gasping for breath and falling around, so I jumped out, by that time the teacher and kids came running up, I said, "Get the Doctor out, he must be dying." The teacher turned to me and said, "Why, your head is bleeding." I felt up to my head, and sure enough it was hurt. The stop was so quick that I hadn't realized that my head had broken the windshield. Dr. Bowden recovered enough to apply antiseptic to my forehead and remove the small pieces of glass. The steering wheel had hit him in the stomach and knocked the breath out of him. The axle on the car was in worse shape than we were; it was so badly bent that we had to cripple slowly down the mountain through **Burroughs Cove**. We finally made it home and believe me I sure had the headache by

then. My boyfriend said, “If you don’t quit riding with that doctor, you are going to get killed.” But, I kept riding with him as long as I worked in the **Health Department**, which was about five years.

Doc, as most people called him, was a small man of about 5’ 5”. He was small in stature, but he was dreaded by politicians who met with his disapproval. One of his sayings was that he was always ready to go to bat for someone or something he believed in. I remember when the new gym was built in the high school. He wanted a nice basement in it for the school lunchroom and meetings, etc. He had an awful time convincing the school board that it would be a good thing and that they could afford it. Since it has been built, it has proved its value over and over, not only as a meeting place for different clubs such as **Farm Bureau**, etc. and various activities of the school.

He always contended that the grammar schools in the county should teach home economics to the girls and agriculture and trades to the boys in the 7th and 8th grades. He said, “There are too many boys and girls who don’t go to high school, and they are the ones who need this training.” Unfortunately this was one of his dreams that never came true in our country. I hope someday it will because I think it would be a wonderful opportunity for the children.

He liked to make people think he was a tough sort of person. He may have fooled some folks, but those of us who knew him well, knew him to be honest, kind-hearted, and trustworthy. He was a real friend to anyone who went to him in need. Many people went to him for advice and counsel. He was always up on all news. I don’t reckon anything happened that he didn’t know about. He usually managed to be the first one at a wreck or fire.

I remember one wreck we came upon that had just happened. The car was torn up pretty badly, and the two men were bleeding. I helped him apply first-aid. Then the ambulance came to take them away. **Dr. Bowden** drove away apparently none the worse, but I couldn’t think of those men without shaking.

A day or two after I went to work for the **Doctor**, he received a call that a miner had been hurt in the mines. He said, “Come on **Ruby**, I want you to see how some of these miners live.” These people lived in a pole pen with a roof over it, with nothing but a dirt floor and an oil can for a stove. I don’t remember how badly the man was hurt, but I think his back was broken.

MY GRANDMOTHER

(Minerva Elizabeth Patton Patterson Goodman—1864-1932)

My grandmother wore old-fashioned, long, dark dresses. She usually wore a gay colored shawl that she had crocheted around her shoulders. I’ll never forget her bonnets. They were

made of heavy black material and were trimmed with black beads. She had long, black hair, and she enjoyed having us kids comb or brush it. We would stand combing her long, thick, black hair for hours.



Minerva Patton Patterson Goodman holding Mary ?



Minerva Patton Patterson Goodman (1864-1932)

Although she had to take medicine every day, she was seldom well; when I knew her, she had no money to call her own and had to live with first one and then the other; she was one of the most cheerful persons I've ever met. She always had something to be thankful for and laugh about.

(Pictured below are Minerva's two sons by her first husband Daniel Patterson, and her three children by her second husband Henry N. Goodman.)



Arthur Patterson (left) and his brother Daniel Patterson. Center: their half-sister Octavia Goodman



Octavia's brother Elbert Goodman and her sister Allie Blair Goodman

We lived in the country where bathrooms were hardly ever heard of and never seen. So **Grandmother** carried a small chamber around with her everywhere she went. She always carried it in a hatbox. She really had a good laugh when one day she went to visit a friend, and of course she carried her hatbox. Her friend met her, and in the presence of several men, insisted that she show her her new hat. Now Grandmother was very modest and had a hard time, but she managed to get into the bedroom before showing the contents of the hatbox to the friend. Her friend was very much surprised.

Grandmother wore a little black and white checked apron all the time except when she went to church, etc. She always had a pocket on the apron, and in the pocket she carried a little knife that she used to clip thread and dip snuff with. We children would crowd around to see the knife when she started to take a dip of snuff. She loved to piece quilts and nothing gave her more delight than to start in on a large pile of quilt scraps. She would first piece a quilt top in some pattern with large pieces of material. Then as the scraps got smaller the design of the next top would get smaller. It seemed that no scrap was too small for her to use.

She loved to drink coffee. She had been born and partly reared in Alabama. It was just like a fairy tale to hear her tell about **Aunt Neicey** (*Berniece Cobb Worley a sister to **Minerva's** mother **Martha Jane Cobb Patton***) and various friends and relatives who lived there.



Aunt Berniece Cobb Worley

It was a custom where my sister and I went to school at **Pelham**, for the school to turn out for morning services during a revival at either church. The children would march by two's to church and stay until it was over, then we marched back to school. I remember very well that on one occasion we had marched to church, and my **Grandmother** was there. We sat through the sermon and the preacher, **Brother Adams**, was his name, made an altar call. My sister and I were as usual sitting together. Grandmother left her seat and walked down the aisle to my

sister and me and invited us to the altar, and we went. I've always thought that was the sweetest and best thing she could have done for us. We later joined the church and were baptized.

AUNT ALLIE

(Alabama Nancy "Allie" Patton Blair)

Although **Aunt Allie**, as she was called by all who knew her, never had any children of her own, she had fed and partly reared at least twenty-nine. She was a small woman of about ninety pounds. She had long, dark brown hair that touched the floor when she was sitting down. She always wore a long, dark-colored dress below her ankles that was always long-sleeved and usually had a black wool shawl across her shoulders. According to what I have been told she had been a very beautiful woman.



Alabama Nancy "Allie" Patton Blair and her husband Martin Blair

She was my mother's aunt, and when my grandmother's first husband (*Daniel Patterson, Jr.*) died leaving her with two small boys (*Arthur and Daniel Patterson III*), **Aunt Allie** took them into her home. When my grandmother later married (*Henry N. Goodman*), she kept the two boys and reared them. She was especially fond of the younger, Dan, and would do anything for him. He married, and she thought even more of his wife, **Annie (Jacobs)**. She and **Uncle Mart (Martin Blair)** took four of their fifteen children and kept them all the time. The others dropped in to eat and sleep. She and Uncle Mart owned about two hundred acres of good fertile land, and they had just about anything they needed for good country living.

In time, Dan's fifteen children married, and they would bring their children to Aunt Allie's. They were accepted and loved as much as grandchildren. She was especially fond of **Kenneth**,

Isabell's son. I don't think he ever visited his grandmother without spending most of the time with Aunt Allie.

When Aunt Allie was younger, she was a fine seamstress. My mother says she never stopped short of perfection. In her old age, she became almost blind and had to walk slowly about with a cane. She still managed to read some, holding the paper a few inches from her eyes. She said that she reckoned the Lord meant for her to be left alone. When she was born, she had a twin brother who died, then her mother (*Martha Jane Cobb Patton*) died and later her father (*John Patton*). She went to live with an aunt (*Elizabeth "Betsey" Patton Osborne*); then she died. She married but had no children, and then her husband (*Alexander Martin "Mart" Blair*) died leaving her a widow.

She made her home with Uncle Dan's oldest daughter **Thelma** whom she had reared from childhood. Thelma was mighty good to her, and all Aunt Allie did, when she wasn't visiting about in the neighborhood, was sit by the radio and listen to sermons and sacred hymns. She really enjoyed them. She made no preference of any denomination, just so long as they were on the subject of the **Bible**. She was always writing for the sermons and articles on the Bible. I have one now that she gave me shortly before she died. When her friends visited her, she would invariably ask if they cared to read such and such an article.

She was always proud to have the neighbors and friends drop in especially the ones she hadn't seen in some time. She would call them over to the light and look at them closely to see if they had changed any. She would take the children one by one and trot them on her knees.

She had played an organ quite well when she could see well enough to read music. When she became older, one of her greatest delights was playing the piano and singing. One of the boys she reared was **Reuben**. He enjoyed telling funny stories. **Aunt Allie** never got tired of listening to him. She would sit for hours laughing at anything he would tell. I'll never forget one story he told that happened when he was a young boy. **Uncle Mart** had a nice buggy for them to ride in since there were very few cars at that time. Reuben and some of the boys hitched the horse to the buggy and were riding around in the barn lot when all of a sudden the horse darted into the hallway of the barn. The buggy top caught in the hallway ceiling and snapped off even with the seat. The boys, no doubt, were severely reprimanded at the time, but Reuben could think back and tell it with a lot of amusement.

The last few years of **Aunt Allie's** life, **Thelma** would give a birthday dinner in her honor each year. This was a source of great pleasure to her, when once again she could welcome friends and relatives into her home and see them served a hearty meal. Last summer she became slightly ill. The kinfolks didn't think she was seriously ill, but one day she told **Annie**, Dan's wife, that she felt she had lived out her time and told them where to find her clothes to be buried in. She had taken them out of the trunk and placed them in a dresser drawer.

She also asked that they give her few remaining things such as books, quilts, keepsakes, etc. to different members of the family. They immediately called the children she had reared. They all came, including **Reuben**. She was so happy while he was there and laughed at all his stories as usual. We all thought she was better, but after he left she said, "I'm ready to go now, I've seen my baby one more time."

She began to get worse. **Isabel, Clifton, Dillon** and all the children and their children came every night to see and sit with their **Aunt Allie** who had fed and cared for them when they were small. In a few weeks she passed on out of this life, but her memory and unselfish deeds will live always in the hearts and minds of all who knew her and was befriended by her. (*Written April 22, 1954*)

Note: The story line belongs to Ruby Partin Long. I hope by my inserting names and photos, nothing was detracted from her generous work. I think she would have been happy with it. I did leave out some small comments of love she wrote for her living family, but they can be read any time from her little booklet. I fully understand the effort she put forth to accomplish this good work, and I will be happy to hand down her story to our two grandchildren. (Jackie Layne Partin)