Memories of the Stover Family

By Della Stover

While working on my family tree, I contacted relatives and made notes of conversations I have had over the years with my family and my Aunts and Uncles. I did not know too much about my grandparents and their parents. My Dad’s sister, Irene, told me what I have learned of them.

Joseph Lewis Stover  
son of Gulf Lewis

Joseph Lewis Stover was the son of Gulf Lewis and Catherine Williams. He married Marcella Light, daughter of John Smith Light and Catherine Shoemaker. Upon their marriage, she was disowned by her family. Many believe that she was of the Jewish faith. At a very young age, Marcella had the measles which caused her to be partially deaf for the rest of her life. They had nine children. Their names are Dorsey, Bruce, Hattie, Clinton, Gaile, Trenton, Garnet, Violet, and Capitola.

My grandmother, Della DeHart and her brother, Aubrey (Aubry) loaded up their belongings and brothers and sisters in a horse drawn wagon in Big Ridge, Va. and moved to Mossy Creek where her three oldest brothers worked for Joseph Stover. Dorsey was my Grandfather. His father, Joseph, bought a lot of land around Mossy (Creek), Skelton, and Prosperity, West Virginia. He was in the lumber business and had a general store. Dorsey went to work in the coal mines near Skelton. She met Dorsey there, and they got married in Sand Branch, Raleigh County, West Virginia in 1919. They had 6 children:
Irene, Donald, Dorsey Lee, Nancy, Tom, and Aubrey. Aubrey only lived one day. Grandma was going on 24 years when they married. Two sisters and three brothers stayed with them until they married or went out on their own. Woodrow (Hick) was about eight years old when Irene was born and was very jealous of the new baby. Grandma had to watch him very carefully because he would do things to make her cry.

More anecdotes about Marcella: This info comes from Aunt Irene and Uncle Dorsey. Great-grandma Stover’s brother operated a service station in Skelton, West Virginia, but did not speak to her as far as anyone knew. Aunt Irene remembers that her two sisters did visit one day, but Marcella never saw them again. The day Marcella died, she was in her bedroom upstairs. Her daughter, Hattie, was walking up the steps to check on her and she yelled at Hattie to be more quiet. She regained her hearing the day she died. She died in 1950 at Dry Hill, Raleigh County, West Virginia, which is close to Prosperity.

I do not know if you all have seen the picture of Donald and Nancy sitting in a wagon with Dorsey Lee and Irene standing behind them; but at that time the wagon was for my dad, Donald. He had fallen out of a tree onto the woodpile next to the wagon. They were afraid he would be paralyzed forever. Luckily, he was not. At one time, Irene, Donald, Dorsey, Grandma and Grandpa Stover came down with Typhoid Fever. It was a epidemic at the time. That is how my youngest brother Ray caught it in 1955. Grandma was the carrier.

Aunt Irene told me the following stories about her and my dad. Once it had snowed real bad, and they had to walk through at least a foot deep of snow. Irene did not have boots so their Mom told Dorsey Lee and dad to walk ahead and make a path for Irene. Well, boys being boys, they would take giant steps and Irene ended up losing her shoes and had to walk barefoot the rest of the way and back home again. When they arrived home Grandma asked, “Irene, where are you shoes?” Irene told her what happened so dad and Dorsey Lee had to go out and make a path and find Irene’s shoes.

One day Irene was visiting a friend, and Grandma told dad to take the horse and go get Irene. Of course, dad being dad, took the route with a lot of trees. They were riding bareback and dad was going lickety-split through the trees. She said that she was scared to death that they would hit a branch and she would fall off the horse; but they did not.

When her oldest son, Larry was born in November of 1941, dad was stationed at Camp Grant in Illinois. She heard a knock on the door and it was dad. He said no one was going to keep him from seeing his first nephew; so he went AWOL.

Dad tried to teach Aunt Irene how to drive one day. She put the car in gear, hit the gas like dad told her to do; then ran into one of her Uncle’s brand new car. That was the end of the driving lesson.

When she was pregnant with Ricky (Raymond), she got very sick one day; so grandma told him to take Irene to the Doctor and wait for her and take her home. He did take her, and Irene told him to wait. He said he would. When the doctor gave her the shot to get over being sick, he told her not to walk home or she would get sick again. She waited on the steps of the doctor’s office for a couple of hours and dad had not shown up.
She ended up walking home and getting sick again. After Ricky was born; my mother, Laura, went over to help her out. My mom was changing a dirty diaper when Lawrence, Irene’s husband, came home and made some sort of wisecrack to Mom, and all of a sudden the dirty diaper was all over him. He chased her, but she out ran him. (Was there any doubt that she would not?)

Of course, dad would no more get a stripe than lose it because he would go AWOL to see his family. Mom said the Army finally sent him overseas so he could not go AWOL. Guess I should tell you how Mom and Dad got together in her own words.

“In 1940 I went to live with my Aunt and Uncle and Grandparents (Thompsons) who lived in Illinois. World War II was going on at that time. I soon went to work at a drug store making and selling popcorn. Camp Grant was located just outside of Rockford, and that is where I met my Husband, Don. I had been to church when my grandparents sent me across the street to pick up some hotdogs. My Aunt told me to get myself a soldier while I was out. WELL I DID JUST THAT!!!!!! Don was there with two other soldiers; I took all three of them back to meet my grandparents and my aunt. She was flabbergasted. We got married in December of 1941.” I found this short bio written by her in a book I have. She must have put it there when she had visited me.

In 1955, we moved to Michigan for about a year. That is where Grandpa and Grandma Stover lived. Also, Aunt Irene had moved there when her first husband Lawrence Hawks was killed in a West Virginia coal mine explosion. By the time we moved there, she was married to Uncle LaVerne. We moved to a farm outside of Sandusky, Michigan, where dad had a trucking job. Then Ray got sick with what we found out to be typhoid fever in July. We moved back in with our grandparents and stayed there until he got well.

I can remember picking cherries for them to can and freeze. We went on hayrides which ended up at Aunt Irene’s where we would roast wiener and marshmallows over an open fire. My brother Dorsey always liked Grandma’s chocolate cakes because they would fall in the middle and she would fill it up with chocolate frosting.

Grandma would tell us stories about when Bonnie, Ronnie, and I stayed with her during World War II. Mom was working in Iowa, while dad was overseas. My Aunt Nancy taught me how to Boogie Woogie while we were staying in West Virginia.

The funniest thing I can remember happening in Michigan was Grandpa and Grandma had two honey-colored dogs. They had given one to Phyllis and Basil Tate. Grandpa took the other one and put it in his gray 1949 Ford and took him out in the country and dropped him off. Grandpa Stover was a very slow driver; so by the time he got back home; there was the other dog sitting on the front steps. (He did not know it came from Basil’s.) He thought the dog beat him home. All of us laughed until we were in tears.