

(Written October 31, 1984 by Phyllis Jo Surface Smith Acuff in response to several members of the family urging me to do this!)

Dear Family,

At least 30 years ago, I sat down with Grandad Surface (John Worth) in the big old kitchen at Carbondale, Kansas--down on the farm and had him tell me a little of the family history. These are some of the facts and stories which he related.

Great Grandfather, Noah S. Surface was born on February 23, 1845. His parents were both of German ancestry (probably direct). His mother's last name was Iric And his father was Adam. His brothers and sisters were Andrew, Jake, Amos (wife, Frances--they had two children) Lucinda, (husband, Oliver____lived in Eaton, Ohio,) Hulda, Rhoda (maybe named Cotterman husband, Frank, Eaton Ohio, 1 girl Bertha) perhaps another child and names of Earl and Ethel belong to this group somewhere. At any rate Andrew was oldest and Rhoda was youngest. This family must have lived very close to Eaton, Prebble Co., Ohio and they were farmers.

Grandad Noah enlisted the Ohio National Guard and was a Volunteer for 100 days. Now, whether he later enlisted in the Ohio Infantry, I don't know--he may have been simply transferred into it--whatever they did back then! At any rate the date was 1861 at Eaton, Ohio. He was a Private in Co. B. 156 Ohio Infantry and served under Captain Isaac Henderson's B Company, 34th Regiment. There was a Register No. 35941 in this information also. He gave his age as 19 but you can see he was only 16! There are dates in here of August 2, 1863 and April 2, 1866, also May 1, 1866. When he was mustered out at close of war he received a letter of appreciation which was signed by Abraham Lincoln and Stanton dated September 10, 1864 at the Executive Mansion, Washington City---was that the Whitehouse?

After the war Great Grandad Noah returned to the farm at Eaton, Ohio and as my Grandad, John said, "His pa sent him over to Ridenour's and he never came back!" This is in reference to his meeting, courting and marrying the Ridenour's daughter, Sarah Catherine who was my Great Grandmother.

Grandmother Sarah Catherine's family were also farm people and also German. Her mother's maiden name was Fudge. Her brothers and sisters were Jane and other girls and the boys were Sam, Will and Joe. Grandad metioned that Will may have moved to El Reno, Oklahoma---I need to check this out. At any rate they were Uncle Will and Aunt Mary. Sarah Catherine was born between 1845 and 1848. Wish I knew what her parents names were and exactly when she was born. 48

my Grandmother's name is Runnels
I suspect that May 1st date is their Wedding date because I have another notation May 1, 1866, Columbus, Ohio. At any rate they had 4 children, Cora, born 1868, Ida Mae, born 1870, John Worth born 1872 and Clarence, born 1878. Somewhere in here I think that Grandad Noah was given land in Kansas--wasn't that a practice at the end of the Civil War in gratitude for service? At any rate they homesteaded at Lyndon, Kansas in 1869 or 1870. (By the way, Cora was born in a dugout in Ohio) While they were here, Grandad Noah had to earn a living while building up the farm and so he took employment in the coal mines in Osage City. While in Osage City during the week he boarded with the Ubersfor 2.00 a week board and room! On Saturday he would walk back back the 11 miles to Lyndon and the family--this was on Saturday night! Then on Monday morning, early early, he would walk the 11 miles back to work. (I hope none of us are complaining about how tired we are!!!!) Grandad John told me that once while he was doing the mining work that a terrible snowstorm came up on a Saturday and very late in the night when he had not returned that Grandmother, Sarah Catherine, (his mother) got all the children up--Clarence was not yet born because this was the winter of 1877 and by candlelight they knelt on the dirt floors to pray that God would protect him..Isn't that a precious scene?

While living here they probably did build the frame house which I later stayed in and they build a barn. Grandad said they "dressed a rock up with chisel and hammer" and I played many happy hours with cousins in that old barn and cousin Phyllis Rhae at Crescent, Oklahoma has a picture of it.

In the school year of 1878 and 1879, Grandad John Worth started to school--his sisters no doubt were already in school and Clarence was a baby. The School was the Uber school and was named for the Uber family. Frank Uber later moved to Topeka, Kansas and lived on Winfield Street. This was a one room school 1 and 1/2 miles South of the home place and N.E. from Lyndon, Kansas 5 miles. It was taught at that time by Alice Salisbury. Grandad quit in the 8th grade (with some interruption in between). The last teacher he had was Bertha or Carrie Hedestrom--he couldn't remember which one. While in the first grade Grandad John gave this poem in a school program and it is remembered by Cora's children so it must have been popular or else she may have taught it to little brother, John Worth! It goes like this:

MISTER FINNEY'S TURNIP

Mister Finney had a turnip
And it grew and it grew and it grew
Down behind the barn----
And the turnip did no harm!

It grew and it grew til it could grow no taller
Then Mr. Finney dug it up and put it in the cellar..
There it lay til it began to rot,
Then his daughter Susie washed it and put it in a pot.
She boiled it and she boiled it
As long as she was able
Then his daughter Lizzie took and put it on the table.
Mister Finney and his wife both sat down to sup.
They ate and they ate until they ate the turnip up!

He was 6 years old when he gave this.

(I find another notation which says that they lived first in a dugout and in 1872 built a 2-room frame house which had a wood stove)

It would be nice if this idyllic scene could go on but in the winter of 1880 the Sammy Royer family came to the farm. They were moving in covered wagons and they were ill. 4 of the children had the measles! Sarah Catherine helped to take care of them and eventually all of them except 2 men came down with the illness. One of the women died in childbirth, the mother died one week and the daughter the next and while the neighbors came in to help and stay with the sick, Sarah Catherine contracted the measles which progressed into consumption and pneumonia and later tuberculosis. She was not going to get well in the Kansas climate so the doctor suggested they take her to Florida where it was warm. This was sometime in 1881. So Noah loaded her and the children and the trunks into a lumber wagon--she had to be carried--and they went the slowest possible way. Cousin Ruth thinks they went first to Eaton, Ohio to visit her family and his before going to Florida. At any rate, they boarded a River Boat at Carbondale, Illinois went via St. Louis down the Mississippi to New Orleans and then by Gulf boat to Cedar Keys, Florida. From Cedar Keys they went to a little new railroad town named Archer in Alachua Co. (Grandad always knew the counties each town was in but I'm not certain of the spelling of that one) Here they stayed in a house of some people who were away for the winter (Why would you be away for the winter in Florida??) These people had a negro housekeeper who took care of them. In November of 1881 they were all eating supper when Sarah Catherine died. She was trying to sing "Jesus Lover of My Soul, Let Me To Thy Bosom Fly"! (What a blessed scene!) The black

housekeeper's husband made a coffin, they took it in a wagon and a Quaker lady named Mrs. Lipsey preached Great Grandmother's funeral. One of the children asked as the coffin was lowered, "Why is Mamma in the well?" She was between 33 and 35 years old at the time. (Can you imagine the heartbreak for Grandpa Noah as he loaded 4 small children and belongings for the long lonely trip back to Kansas?)

The next portion of this account was a remark by one of the cousins that when Grandad Noah married Drucilla Carter, a widow with 4 children also and took her home in the wagon she got out and gave each of the 4 Surface children a big hug and they loved her immediately. Her children were Bill, Ellie, Effie, and Annie Carter. What a household! I remember my dad, Herbert Surface, telling about Grandmother Drucilla and how loving and dear she was to all of the family. They continued to live on the farm in Kansas and I believe Drucilla died there.

(Some of you can now continue this story better than I can)

During these years Cora Belle married James Secord, Ida Mae married Sherman Runnels, John Worth married Alta Mamie Haworth and Clarence Andrew married Blanche Bodenhammer.

John was 21 when the Strip opened in September of 1893. He made the run into and staked a claim East of Coldwater which is now Nash, Oklahoma. The Secords lived south of Grandad's claim and I shall never forget the old two story house, the Secord reunions and the tall, old cedar trees which lined the drive.

For the sake of the cousins who do not know each others history I will relate what little I do know.

Cora's children were (probably not in order at all): Mildred Wayman (deceased) Arthur (deceased), Earl (deceased), Ruth Arksey, Morrow, Georgia, Lucille Warren, Portland Oregon, Helen Cronin, Longmont, Colorado, Fern Secord, Nash, Oklahoma, Glendora Conners, Hillsdale, Oklahoma, Opal Rayner, Nash, Oklahoma, and Ted (deceased). They had one son, Phillip who died as a baby.

Ida Mae's children were: (she was Aunt Mae to me) Nell Card (deceased) and Jess (deceased) and Bess living in Brazoria, Texas. Nell's daughter, Phyllis Rahe lives in Crescent, Oklahoma--her husband is Max Rahe. Mae lived many many years at Brazoria Texas. Perhaps that is why Grandad Noah moved to Palfuras, Texas. It was there that he married again and there he died May 6, 1940. We visited him there in 1938 or 1939 and I remember him very well---those whiskers! My dad always laughed at Great Grandad using some kind of wood for fence posts because they would last a long, long time---he was in his 90's then.

Then John's children were Herbert Ellsworth born December 21, 1899, Ruby born July 14, 1903 and Hollis Lee born November 15, 1923. They lived in Nash, Oklahoma then Lawrence, Kansas and at one time in Lyndon on the old place homesteaded by grandad Noah. They lived several years on a farm at Carbondale Kansas and then moved to Kansas City, Kansas. We lost Grandad there in 1963. Herbert died on April 12, 1980 and Ruby lives on her farm at Lawrence Kansas and Hollis on a farm at Tonganoxie, Kansas.

I am sure that each of you can insert a great deal to this story but that is "the rest of the story". I guess there is no really good way to end this except to say that it looks to me like we can all be proud to part of one of the familys which made our country what it is and certainly we can be very proud to be part of a family to whom the Christian faith was woven into the fabric of life. That is really the best heritage of all!

God Bless You All!

*Clarence's son, Alan
lives in OKC*