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Blue

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Blue

Misty Mix

Church railing is not the focus.

Smiling face is not for the photographer.

She is in her favorite spot: daddy's arms.

Wind entices blonde hair to dance.

Tree leaves stir up a melody.

Eyes closed against the sun.

If opened, reflections of delight would shine.

Lace adorned blue dress and red striped blue shirt all against a blue sky.

The air must smell of country: fresh manure, honeysuckle, tilled earth.

Sunlight in their faces illuminates much, but not all.

The lens again will never capture these two.

Both gone now like the county background.

City grows up around the old barn and church.

Sunny day's peace broken by the transformation of change.

Touch the print and touch death.

The negative is all that remains.

LOOK WHAT I GOT Jennifer Triggs



My Indian Childhood in Oklahoma

Kathy Allen

I STILL HAVE VIVID MEMORIES OF GROWING UP AMONG MY INDIAN RELATIVES IN OKLAHOMA. In the late '40s and early '50s, before I was born, the state of Oklahoma had started removing the Native Americans from the reservations. The Government had built several blocks of homes for them, all one-bedroom, and my father, who was part Comanche and part Creek, qualified for one of them. We lived there in a community of Comanche, Apache and Kiowa in Oklahoma City.

However, I spent much of my childhood visiting my grandparents, who lived out in the country on a farm. I can still remember my Great Grandmother Minnie, even though she died when I was a child. I can remember her long braided hair and how much she looked like the other Indian women in my neighborhood.

My grandparents had much to do with the training and character building of their grandchildren. My oldest brother Roy and I, often with our cousins Susan and Janine, visited them on weekends to help with the farm work. Grandma Ruby Nell used to give each of us a bucket and sent us into the orchard to pick apples, peaches, pears and cherries, always with strict instructions not eat any of the cherries. After filling our buckets, we took them to her to wash and remove the stems.

Of course, we usually ate some cherries. When Grandma Ruby Nell asked us if we had, Roy always said "no," but she knew he was lying. She would then lead us out into the front yard and tell us to break a switch off the bush. If we selected a short, thin switch, she would walk out herself, choose a longer, thicker one, and switch us with it.

It took us a year or two to figure out how she always knew we were lying. You see, the house had no indoor plumbing, no bathroom with mirrors, just an outhouse.

After the new, modern bathroom was put in later, we could go inside, look in the mirror, and see the cherry stains all around our mouths!

Grandmother Ruby Nell taught me many practical lessons: cooking, canning and sewing. Since she happened to be my Sunday School teacher, she also made sure I learned my Bible verses. Because I had trouble learning to read—I would see the words all run together on the page—she developed a practical way of teaching me. She always had green beans from the garden for me to snap with her in the evening. We would sit on the front porch swing, and she would say, "Repeat after me: 'The Lord is my Shepherd.'" Then she would have me snap each end of the green bean. Then the next line: "I shall not want," and I would snap each end of another green bean. We would continue until I knew all the lines, and got the green beans snapped at the same time.

My grandpas were also important in my life. After my parents divorced, when I was eight, Grandpa Wall came to live with us. He worked with my father's dad, who had his own carpentry business. It was what every hyperactive girl needed, two grandfathers paying attention to her. They would often take Roy and me to work with them on Saturdays. I learned to sand baseboards and to use a hammer.

Grandpa Wall used to tell me, "If someone is willing to teach you something, you should learn it. You never know down the road of life when you might be able to use it." Both grandfathers told me that they didn't care what I did for a living when I grew up. I could be a dishwasher in a restaurant if I wanted to, but I must make sure to be the best dishwasher they had. "If not," they said, "the pay check doesn't belong to you."

(continued on page 20, second column)