PREFACE

Having been earnestly requested by my daughter, Mrs. Annie Vinson Stratton, to write a history of our Family, will try and write partial account, as far as I know or can remember. I'm very sorry, that I did not in my youthful days, have a desire to ask more questions in regard to same, or that I was not voluntarily informed more, by my immediate parents. Therefore, what I shall write, will not be entirely satisfactory or interesting.

Thomas Stokely Vinson

August 1st, 1922.

 CHAPTER ONE

            My Great Grandfathar was named James Vinson. I do not know whether he was born in Tenn. or whether he came to Tenn. in early life from North Carolina or Virginia. I have no knowledge of his parents on either side of the house.
He was called Captain James Vinson, by men who knew him and spoke of him many years ago, and was said to have been a soldier in the War of the Revolution. This statement I have not been able to prove satisfactorily. He lived and owned a body of land near Gallatin, Sumner County, Tenn., in the latter years of 1700 and the first years of 1800 and his name appears often in the old Deed Books, in the transfer of land, during the years mentioned.

His wife was a Benthall, but I do not know her first or given name or where from. They had three sons that I know of, name--Benthall, Enos and Stokely. Stokely, who I think was the youngest, was my Grandfather, but don't know which of the others was the elder. I think they had a daughter or two, but I don't know their names.
I know nothing of the history of Benthall, or his family. I think he moved to Missouri. Enos, I think, married a Bloodworth. He had two sons that I know of -- James and CarroIl, and three daughters, Eliza, Jane and Parthena. My grandfather partly raised or provided for the daughters, their father dying before they were quite grown.

James Vinson, the son of Enos and nephew of my grandfather, Stokely Vinson, married a Tenn. lady named Harper, about the year 1845. He moved to and lived in southern La., on a sugar plantation which he owned, on the Bayou Lafourche, eight miles from Donaldsonville on the Mississippi River. He had two sons and two daughters, the sons named Walker and Richard, and the daughters named Alice and Lilly. Walker was in the Confederate Army and was badly wounded im the head, he married and was afterward a professor in schools in Jefferson, Texas, and other places and is now dead. Richard married and in later life was Mayor of Shreveport, La. Now dead. Both were very handsome men.

Of the daughters of James Vinson, son of Enos, Alice and Lilly, I know very little. Alice married a man named Green and lived in Nashville part of the years when I lived in Gallatin and Cousin James lived with them, having sold his plantation in La., and he visited myself and family when I lived at the brick house on E. Main St. I never met Lilly though she visited in Gallatin once at the home of Col. Turner, whose wife was her aunt. Cousin James died some years ago and I know nothing of Lilly.

Carroll Vinson, son of Enos, and nephew of my grandfather, moved from Tenn. to southern La. about the time my grandfather did in the year 1848. He lived and owned a sugar plantationon the Bayou Beouf, near Morgan City in St. Mary's Parish, La. I remember to have seen him once when I was a boy, he was a very fine looking man. He married a Miss Berwick, sister of Mr. David and Nathan Berwick, who both owned sugar plantations named after the Berwick family. They had three sons and one daughter, the sons named Bailey Peyton, Van Buren and Baldridge Tyler Vinson. The daughter was named Josephine. I saw her a number of times, about as handsome a woman and fascinating as one ever saw.

Bailey was the oldest and named after Hon. Bailey Peyton of Tenn. He early enlisted in the Confederate Army and became a noted Captain of Scouts. Both he and his father each killed a man in Franklin, La. in self defense. The man Bailey killed was a Trousdale, cousin of the Trousdales of Tenn.

Van Buren Vinson was a fine looking man and much polished in his manners. I knew him fairly well, he was in the Confederate Army, has been dead several years, also Bailey. Did not know the wives of either of them.

Baldridge, the third son, was a rather large man, being over six feet and well proportioned. He belonged to the St. Mary Cannoneers, the same company I did and I knew him well, he seemed to think a good deal of me. When I was sick with the chills in Arkansas, he waited on me in several ways. He married a Miss AIice Baldridge of near Gallatin, but I did not know her. He owned a home and lived and died near Houston, Texas several years ago. I exchanged a few letters with his wife just previous to and after his death. Don't know their children.

Cousin Josephine had one daughter named Olive or Olivia, but I only saw her as a child once or twice, when her mother was on a visit to my grandfather, her granduncle.

As previously mentioned, Enos Vinson had three daughters, Eliza, Jane and Parthena, and who were nieces of my grandfather. They came to La. about the time their brothers, James and Carroll did. Eliza married a sugar planter named D. P. Sparks, who owned a plantation on the Bayou Teche, three miles below Centerville. I saw her once when my grandmother took me with her, when a boy, on a visit. The Sparks had two sons, Calhoun and D. P., Jr. and a daughter named Mattie or Martha. I saw them a few times in boyhood days. Jane married a man named Kemper, whom I don't remember to have seen in my boyhood. Parthena married a man named William Garrett, who owned a sugar plantation on Bayou Sale', three mile's from my grandfather's, therefore, I saw agood deal of her and family during my boyhood and youth and in later years. Cousin Jennie, the daughter, I knew very weIl, both before and after the war, as the families visited a good deal. She married a man, Jesse T. Baldwin, and had a daughter named Lilly, who was a beautiful girl and woman.

James Vinson Garrett, the oldest son, was about my age and belonged to the St. Mary Cannoneers and was in same mess and bunked together during the war. He married a Miss Fleming, had two daughters, and he and his wife died several years since.

Clinton Garrett, another son, clerked in my store during my absence of three months on my first visit to Tennessee in 1870. He did very well; the store was in the yard on the North Bend plantation, where my father lived at the time and he kept a supervision over the business. That was during the days of my success and prosperity, not dreaming of the disappointment and sorrow that was to come in the following years.

Clinton married and became a successful manager of plantations in after years. --- see the foregoing pages have been devoted to the partial history of my great grandfather and the families of his sons Enos and Benthall, the latter of whom I knew so little, and then to the families of Enos, James and Carroll.

My grandfather, Stokely Vinson, youngest son of Captain James Vinson and brother to James and Benthall was born in Tenn. in 1797. He inherited, as I suppose the others must have done, a part in his father's land, situated on the Coles Ferry pike near Gallatin. Upon this land he built a good two story brick house and lived there until the year 1848, when he sold it to Dr. Smith, the father of Col. Baxter Smith of Forests Cavalry during the Civil War.

 He owned negroes and was a well to do man for those times. I am informed that he was part contractor for the building of the Woods Ferry pike. Also, at one time he had a paper mill and rope factory near the Cumberland River. He was a partner in the drygoods business with Col. A. R. Wynn and Gen. Samuel R. Anderson, prominent men of Sumner County in those days, and have heard that at one time he was a county officer. He also ran a steamboat, called the Sam Dale, in the trade between Nashville and New Orleans, on which boat, my father, Lorenzo Dow Vinson, was first clerk, and whose letters, from my father and mother written at that time to each other, proving that fact. He was a soldier in the second war with England, called the war of 1812 and 1814, and was in Gen. Coffer's Brigade of Gen. Andrew Jackson's Army, and received his pension as such, in the latter part of his life, not having applied for it sooner. When he sold his farm in Tenn., he moved to near Centerville in St. Mary's Parish, Louisiana, and bought a sugar plantation. All the personal property including negroes, horses, wagons, grandfather clock, piano, and all household furniture, was hauled from GalIatin to Nashville and loaded on a steamboat, which went down the Cumberland into the Ohio River and from it into the Mississippi River and thence by rivers or bayous to Centerville on the Bayou Teche', the plantation being eight miles from Centerville.

 My grandfather married Miss Sarah Fleetwood, who was from North Carolina. They lived together long years on the farm in Tenn. where all their children were born before moving to Louisiana. He was 51 years of age when he moved to Louisiana. My grandparents had eight children, six sons and two daughters. The names of the sons --- Lorenzo Dow, Stokely Texas, Gideon Blackburn, Robert Boyers, John Hall, and Alfred Douglas. Three of them were named for prominent preachers of the long ago, being Lorenzo Dew, Gideon Blackburn, and John Hall. Robert Boyers was named for the father of Col. Thomas Boyers, founder fo the old Gallatin Examiner. Alfred Douglas was named for a prominent Sumner Countian, one time Register of the county. Stokely had Texas for a middle name because Grandpa was absent in that state when he was born. The daughters were named Caroline and Caledonia.

 My father was the oldest child and son. He married Susan Courtney Moss, youngest daughter of a Virginia gentleman, who came to Tenn. in early life and settled in Sumner County. His name was Cato Moss. She was well educated and wrote beautiful letters, as regards both language and penmanship, and my daughter has a letter, written by her in 1846, to my father when he was Clerk on the Steamboat Sam Dale, which will confirm this statement. She was rather small in stature. Miss Emily T. Peyton, daughter of the Hon Balie Peyton, who was in congress from Tenn., has often visited my family and a number of times spoke of my mother as a beautiful lady.

I know very little of the history of my grandfather Cato Moss, on my mothers's side. His name appears in the old Deed Books of Sumner County of more than a century ago, in the buying and selling of property. My grandmother on my mother's side, was a Courtney, but I do not know her given name. They had two sons, John and Thomas G. Moss and five daughters named Martha, Sophia, Sarah, Mary and my mother Susan, and of course the others were my uncles and aunts.

 John Moss died with the cholora in about the year 1841. He married Rhoda Odom, a niece of Eli Odom. Thomas G. Moss married Adelaid Essex, decendant of an old English family. Sophia married Reuben Warner. Martha married Benjamin Gray. Sarah married James Walsh. Mary married James Allen, brother of Mr. Frank Allen, who married a Trousdale and a second time married Madison Goodrich of Nellys Bend, Davidson County. Susan, my mother, married Lorenzo Dow Vinson, my father.

As I have already mentioned, my father was first clerk on the steamboat Sam Dale which Grandfather owned and ran in the trade between Nashville and New Orleans.

I was born Sept. 1st., 1843, there was a second son, William Thomas, who died in early childhood and a third son, Lorenzo Sue, because soon after his birth, my mother died. I was so young when she died that I have no recollection whatever of her. Soon after her death, all Grandfather's family, including my father, myself and the baby brother moved to southern Louisiana as already mentioned. Myself and brother were raised and cared for by our grandparents, which they lovingly and faithfully performed in all respects.

I will now return to my uncles and aunts on the Vinson side. Stokely Texas was a tall good looking man. He married Josephine Leonard a year or two before the Civil War, he was living on the Mississipi River above New Orleans when he died with the yellow fever, date unknown. Gideon Blackburn was manager of Grandpa's plantation for several years until the beginning of the war. He married Miss Martha Fenesee a few years before the war. She was a most estimable lady, educated, refined and gracious, and a musician. I remember her with love and respect. Don't know when or where she died, and Uncle Gid died in Texas at an advanced age. Robert Boyers married Miss Salena Shaw, I also remember her with respect and much kindness. Uncle Bob, as we called him, was drowned on the Gulf Coast while on a partial pleasure and business trip, the vessel being blown over in a sudden storm. Aunt Salena, his widow, lived some with my grandparents after his death. She had a daughter named Dona or Donie. I never saw any more of them after the war. John Hall was in the Confederate Army. He married late in life Mrs. Wright, the mother of the lady my brother married, Miss Jennie Wright. This was in Houston County, Texas where my grandfather refuged from La. after the Federal Army came into southern Louisiana during the war, taking sugar and molasses and enticing the negroes to leave their homes.

Alfred Douglas, Grandpa's youngest son, married Miss Corinna Hamilton of near Gallatin (you will remember her) just before the war and brought her to the old plantation home when I was about fifteen years of age. They lived at different places in St. Mary's Parish until the war came on, when Uncle Dug joined Capt. Bailey Vinson's company of scouts. After the war, he was appointed assessor of the parish and afterwards was manager of different plantations, and when on the Zenor Plantation, near Berwicks Bay in southern part of St. Mary, he was stricken with yellow fever and died in about 1878. His widow lived in Morgan City near where he died for some time and then to New Orleans where she lived until her death some years since. I took one of her boys, Guy, who lived with me a while. When he grew up, he had a good position for several years with the Southern Pacific Railway in New Orleans. Maud, the only daughter, is now living in New Orleans.

Will now mention Aunt Caroline, the eldest of Grandpa's daughters. As I was quite young during her lifetime I don't remember much about her. Have heard she was a handsome lady. She was married in Tenn. before the Vinsons moved to La. to William Douglas. Have heard Mr. Frank Allen say that he was at "the awfair" they called it in those days, when they were married. I suppose they came to La. about the same time Grandpa did. She died in early life. I saw a good deal of Uncle Will, her husband, in after years. He was a very amiable and nice man of fine- family. They had two sons, Clifford and William. They stayed a good deal at Grandpa's on plantation, after their mother died, and they and my brother and myself were boys together. Clifford is still living in Texas. Willie married Miss Mary Stuart Wright, sister of the lady my brother married. I have always called them Sister Jennie and Cousin Stuart. They were both most amiable women, fairly well educated and of good family. Willie and Sister Jennie have been dead some years. I have visited them in Texas many years ago. Cousin Stuart is still living.

Aunt Donnie, the youngest daughter and child, somehow I remember very little about, tho as a boy I must have seen her a good deal. She and Uncle Dug went away to school in about 1853 or 55, when I was about ten or eleven years old, and I remember that I wrote to them, being about the beginning of my youthful correspondence. Aunt Donie went to Holly Springs, Mississippi and Uncle Douglas went to Jackson, La. They must have remained away for a year or two. When they returned, there was yellow fever in New Orleans and think there may have been some cases of it on a boat on which they traveled some. Aunt Donie took the fever and died in about a week or ten days after their return. Grandpa had it but recovered. That was the only time I ever saw my good grandma prostrated with grief. Aunt Donie was buried three miles from our home, on the South Bend plantation, in a vault belonging to Mr. Hudson.

I will now return to Grandpa Vinson. As already stated, when the Federal Army came into southern La. and were finally driven out, Grandpa, fearing they might return, had three four large wagons of four mules each loaded with part of the furniture and household articles of all kinds for camping and for use after they reached their destination and started  for Texas. The negro women rode most of the time with a few children and the men rode some and walked some. Of course they carried flour, sugar, meal, meat and other necessary articles of all kinds, as he did not know that he could buy what he might need on the long journey of 350 miles and thro at that time, a sparsely settled country, especially western La. and eastern Texas. I don't know but it must have taken them more than three weeks to make the journey, maybe not so long. Grandma had her carriage and horses and there was a buggy or two. There may have been a small wagon or two. My brother was about fifteen years of age and I think he rode horseback. He was a good shot with gun and rifle and killed some game on the way, especially after they got into Texas where he killed turkeys and a deer or two. I don't know how many of the negroes were carried with them, as some had gone to the Yankees, but suppose there must have been 25 or 30. Most of the older ones were negroes whom Grandpa had owned in Tenn. and brought with him to La., of the women there were Caroline and. Mary Lloyd, two fine house servants.

Grandma never complained or worried about giving up her good home but was the same cheerful, good managing helpmeet she had always been. At the end of the journey, a good home was established in every way and they lived there two or three years and several good cotton crops were raised, which were hauled down to Houston about a hundred miles and sold at big prices.

They never came back to La. to live but afterwards moved to Belton, Bell County, where Grandma died, never returning to her home in La. Grandpa returned on a visit and was at my house in Centerville, at Uncle Dug's and at Pa's who was still living on the plantation. Uncle Gid was in Texas and Grandpa returned and lived until he died in 1880 at the age of 84. Uncle Gid died a few years later.

Will state now that my father, some ten or twelve years after my mother died in Tenn., married in La., a Miss Susan Harbour, a resident of the parish of the Point Couper on the Mississippi River above New Orleans. She was of a wealthy family, having plantations in that parish and I think my father received through her some twenty thousand dollars.

He and Grandpa, together, bought a plantation in St. Martins Parish, about sixty miles above the home place in St. Mary. They also bought negroes, paying as high as $1800.00 for men and $1200.00 for women. This was just before the war between the states and they had only made two crops when the Federal Army came into that section and took all of the second crop of sugar and molasses, about twenty five thousand dollars worth, the negroes were freed, the plantation was overflowed from waters from the Mississippi River, so the venture was an almost total loss.

My father and stepmother had three daughters, Judith Ann, Melvina Stone and Daisy, all born in St. Mary's Parish. I saw a good deal of them when they were small. Judith looked a good deal like my Jennie. She died in Texas some ten years ago. Daisy died in Texas several years ago. Sister Mallie is now living in Houston, Texas, has two married daughters, Mable and Daisy, don't remember their husbands' names. Sister Mallie's husband's name is James King and also have a son named James. They once owned a home and lived in Cameron, Texas.

My father lived on the plantation in La. when Grandpa moved and refuged in Texas, several of the negroes remaining with him

 (Will now write of my brother, Bud, as he was called by everyone.) As already stated, he married in Texas after the war, where he had gone with Grandpa, to Miss Jennie Wright. They lived on a farm, which had belonged to his wife's father, for a number of years, where nearly all of their children were born. It was in a remote section of Houston County, with very few advantages of any kind. He removed to near Huntsville in Walker County, where the older children began going to school. They had ten children, William, Dow, Susan, Daisy, Lillian, Gibbs, Irene, Mallie, John and

Fleetwood. Dow died in childhood and one in infancy. Irene died when about grown.

I saw them all during my several visits from Tenn. to see my brother in Texas, twice while he lived in Houston County, once when he lived near Huntsville and once when when he lived in Huntsville, after his wife died.

  That has now been a long time ago. William and Gibbs live in Huntsville, all the others live in or near Houston and doing very well, and all married. They all grew up to be nice respectable men and women, considering the want of early schooling and limited education. I can truthfully say that they were a nice, obedient set of children and in all my visits, I never saw nor heard any unusual noise or disobedience in their manner or deportment among themselves or towards their parents; they were just one happy family, though not well off in situation or this world's goods.

Sister Jennie was an exception of a woman, possessing all the virtues of a good wife and mother. I never saw nor heard even the semblance of a disagreement between she and my brother.

Having written what little I know of most of the decendants of my great-grandfather and fo Grandpa, without going into small particulars, will now write at your request, something of my humble self. As stated, was born near Gallatin on Sept. the first, 1843. Was taken with the family, at age of about four and half years to southern La. when they removed from Tenn. to that state. Have a very faint rememberance of falling from Beauty, a beautiful white saddle horse of my mother's when happened to be left alone upon him for a short time, by the person I suppose was coming for me, a also of rolling down a small grassy hill with the larger negro boy named Shed, who was appointed to mind and care for me in my play. All else of that few years in Tenn. is a complete blank.

 Will say, however, that I was told in after years, that once one of the negro women took me to see an old Mrs. Forrester, who lived on a small place near my grandpa's, and that on returning home, I said that I had eaten eleven batter cakes, not knowing really the significance of numbers. As related already, we were on a steamboat from Nashville to New Orleans, down the Cumberland into the Ohio and then the Mississippi. The boat was a stern wheeler and Uncle John and myself were at the very end of the boat in the cabin looking down at the wheel going over and over, when I, by accident, dropped a pen knife over the railing into the water. All else of the trip a blank.

 I don't remember the arrival at the plantation, where Grandpa was to make his home, or anything of any consequence until I was about ten years old, when Uncle Dug and Aunt Donie left to go to school, as already mentioned.

Yes, I recall one incident. Aunt Donie, before leaving for Holly Springs, Miss. to school, had been going to school to a private teacher on the plantation of Mr. Hudson, about two miles from Grandpa's. One morning, I was allowed to ride a small horse, with an older negro boy up behind me, to accompany her part of the way. Upon reaching the lane, between our home and the Rice Plantation, the horse I was riding, on account of the mosquitos being so bad, turned around with his head towards home and ran away with me, and all that half mile ride home, I was calling "whoa, whoa" and Will, the negro boy was shouting, "Hold him, Thomas, hold him". We made such a noise that as we neared home, some of them in the yard ran to the front gate and out quickly, which made the horse shy suddenly, and off I tumbled into the road, tho the boy behind me did not fall. They thought I was near killed, but was only stunned, and the commotion was soon over.

Some time after that and Uncle Dug and Aunt Donie had gone away to school, I went to school a while at Mr. Hudson's and after that, went to school at Mr. David Berwick's, four miles from home and rode old Beauty, my mother's saddle horse in Tenn., which had been brought south when the other stock was

Some larger boys induced me one day at noon, to chew a little tobacco, and I soon became deathly sick and was permitted to go home on Beauty. Was so sick that I couldn't go to school for several days, don't think Grandma knew what was the matter with me. On reaching home and riding up to the carriage house, I just slipped off and left him unsaddled, hardly able to reach the house. Of course, I remember a good deal about the days on the plantation when myself and Bud and Clifford and Willie Douglas, Aunt Caroline's sons, who lived there some after her death, and we had our boyish sports. The cooper shop, the blacksmith shop, the big barn, the carriages and buggies and horses, the sugar house and sugar making in fall and winter and the darkies singing in the field when at work, and the fiddle and tamborine in the quarters at night.

Nearly everyone had a horse for his own use. Had plenty good servants, and all things going on with law and order. Bud and myself, about once a week, would go to the cabin of Old Uncle Charles, the carriage driver, and hear him sing and beat the tamborine with, "Oh Lord, ladies pity my case, for I have a jawbone in my face, up Jamboree"; and then he would tell of times in Tenn. before Old Marster and Miss Sallie came to La. "Them days is gone forever."

Then the big fishing parties down on the Shell banks on the Gulf, the planters and their wives and children, with the negro men to have the seine, the nice negro women to attend to the cleaning of the fish and the cooking, and the boiling of the shrimp and crabs. Fish were usually plentiful for all and plenty to take some home; life caught Red fish, Sheepshad, Flounder, Trout and Mullet and some others. The big seine was about one hundred yards long, with three or four men at each end when they were away out in the water, and then haul to the shore and then haul again.

We had a good deal of company in those days, and with plenty of everything and servants, it was no hardship, but seemed to be a pleasure to all. We had a piano and two uncles had violins, so there was music.

 Of course, I could relate many pleasant incidents of boyhood days, but must pass on to March 1856, when my father took me to Tenn. to go to school. We made the entire trip from New Orleans to Nashville on the same steam boat. Tho tweIve years old and past, I do not remember much of the trip. We made the trip from Nashville to Gallatin by Stage, but I don't know much about it, and don't remember how I met, or was received by my aunts, but of course, it must have been with kindness.

I boarded with my Aunt Patsy Gray during the entire time of over two years, and it was a pleasant and agreeable home all the while. Their son, Frank Gray, two years older than myself, went to same school at same time.

The teacher was Dr. W. W. Lambain, who was from Baltimore. He was very strict and often whipped some scholar for failing in their lessons Nearly all that I know, in the commoner branches of education, was learned at that school, called the "'Transmontania Academy". It was quite a little walk from Aunt Patsy's (Martha) to the school. There was no bridge over the town creek in those days and we had to cross on a large foot log.

My father remained in Gallatin all that summer, as it was his first visit in eight years, since leaving Tenn. in 1848, and it proved to be his last. I had accounts at one or two stores, where I could get such things as needed. I went to Sunday School and very often to church with the family. Did not go over in town much and very seldom at night.

When I left Tenn. in the summer of 1858, to return home in La., having gone to school more than two years, my father sent money for me to pay my accounts and passage home. He sent me, in a letter, the half of a fifty dollar bill, with with instructions to inform him as soon as received and then would send me the other half. This was in order to insure against the loss of one part of it, so that the other part might be redeemed at full value. I arrived safely at home after a tedious journey, as roads and connections in those days were not as convenient as today. I remained at home two

years, going to school to private tutors on near plantations part of the time, when in 1860, I again went to Tenn. to school. Went to the same academy, but under a different teacher. His name was Hubbard, a nice easy man. I don't think I learned very much more at that time. I boarded at that time with Uncle Thomas G. Moss, who lived in the two story brick house on E. Main St., where I afterwards lived myself.

Miss Kate Essex, Nanny, Susie and Charles Moss were young folks in the home with me at that time. And good Aunt Adelaide, always to be lovingly remembered.

In the summer of 1861, I again returned home to La. where I remained until in the fall, the war being on, I joined the St. Mary Cannoneers, which by the name, was intended to be an Artillery Company or Battery. They remained in barracks at Camp Hunter from the fall of 1861 until the spring of 1862. I joined the company on the 7th of October 1861.

In April 1862, we were ordered to New Orleans, and we expected to be ordered to a camp, near where the Battle of Shilo was afterwards fought, but were sent down to Fort Jackson, 80 miles below New Orleans on the Mississippi River. I remember very well marching through the streets of the city with a heavy musket on my shoulder, but did not feel very important.

            We had been in Fort Jackson a few days when the Federal Fleet and big mortars began the bombardment of the fort and for more than a week, the big cannon balls and the big 15 inch shells were coming all the time, day and night. I did not do much, except to stand guard now and then.

            The Confederates had stretched a huge chain across the river just below the fort to interfere with the passage of the enemy's vessels up the river, but one dark night they passed the fort and small Confederate gunboats could not prevent them, so they passed on up to New Orleans, which surrendered rather than be shelled. The fort and all men in it were compelled to surrender.

            The cannoneers were carried up to New Orleans on the enemy gunboats. We were treated well and turned loose on parole. We all went home, how I got home, I don't remember. We were an parole about two or three months when we were exchanged. Then we were reassembled at New Ibera, some 25 miles above Franklin on the Bayou Teche', where we got our guns (cannons) and horses and became a Battery of Artillery. I can't go into detail about our marches over Southern La.

and Arkansas, but will speak of the principal battles we were in. I was in a mess with Jim Garret, Beverly Berwick, Joe and Oscar Berwick, from nearby plantations, making with others ten in a mess.

            I had with me a near grown boy, Wesley, to help me with my horses, as I was the driver of the lead horses on a gun, but soon, as provisions became scarce, had to let him get back home the best he could.

            We marched and counter marched over a good deal of northern La. and southern Arkansas. I had the chills in Arkansas, they came upon me every twenty-one days. I would have two or three, take plenty of quinine and then in the specified time, chills would come again. I had them for several months after the war. I used to be right sick at the time, but would never ride in the ambulance, but on the ammunition box in front of the gun, when we were on the march, to see that the man who was detailed to drive in my place did not abuse my horses.

            Gen. N. P. Banks of the Federal Army made his expedition and march up the Red River country of La. in the spring of 1864. Had a large army and gunboats in the river. The Confederates retreated before him, until we reached Mansfield in north La.

            Gen. Richard Taylor of our army, turned and gave battle there and defeated them badly. That was the most important battle our company was ever in. We had about 18,000 men and the enemy 25,000. Pleasant Hill was fought next day ten miles south, the enemy in full retreat.

            John B. Bonimo of our company, found and brought a violin to camp that night and I played on it, tho I had seen many dead men and horses on the battlefield that day. When we followed them on the retreat and reached the Red River, we fought their gunboats as they came down the river, and captured two transports and drove two gunboats back up the river.

            Captain Florian Octave Cornay, our first captain, was killed in that fight and succeeded by First Lieutenant Minos T. Gordy. I could relate many minor incidents but it would take up too much space.

            We were in a number of smaller battles, following the enemy on their retreat.

            My father had sent me a pair of long-leg boots thru the lines in 1863, which were of great benefit to me. They were made in Franklin and cost $40.00 in greenbacks, as prices were very high at that time.

            Just before the war ended, we were encamped at Shreveport, La. and marched from there to Navarro County, Texas, on our way to Mexico (so was said), this was after Lee and Johnston had surrendered.

            Then seeing how foolish it was, were disbanded. Grandpa was then in Texas, about a hundred miles down the Trinity River, so I made my way down to where he was in Houston County, and remained there from May, when we disbanded, until October, when I rode one of the horses 350 miles back to La. and to the plantation where my father was living.

            I remained there until Jan. when at the request of Pa, I rode the 350 miles again to Grandpa in Texas and staying a few days, returned with five mules, my brother with me, to La. My father wished the mules to aid in the cultivation of the sugarcane, for a crop in the fall of that year, 1866.

            My brother went to school in Centerville about a year, when he returned to Texas.

            I remained upon the place that year, when Uncle Dug commenced a store in Centerville and I clerked for him several months and in the fall went to New Orleans as Entry Clerk in the wholesale grocery of Cammack and Squires, Major Squires of our Artillery Battallion, writing to me and giving me the position. This was in the fall and winter of 1866 and 1867.

            In the spring of 1867, the firm failed, so I returned to the plantation and worked in the sugar making that fall and winter.

            In 1868," Father and Uncle Douglas planted a large crop of sugarcane on the North Bend plantation, just above our old place. On a small stock of goods bought by my father, I commenced a store in a nice building, a short distance from the residence in the yard, and had a horse and saddle and managed the hands in the field at same time.

            I did well that year and made and saved some $1500. The crop was a complete success in every way. Sugar was high and the crop netted $20,000, Uncle Dug one-third and Pa two- thirds.

            The next year, 1869, I attended strictly to my store and did well, having a good negro trade from three plantations.

            In 1870, I still had my store and in the late spring concluded to make a visit to Tenn. and see my mother's relatives. Some time in May or June of 1870, I made preparations to take the trip. A few months before, however, being in doubt about going, I had bought a fine horse and buggy and thought if I could get out from the store more and drive about some, it would answer in place of making the trip.

            But it did not satisfy me, so leaving my distant cousin, Clinton Garrett, to stay in the store, under the supervision of my father, the store being in the yard where he lived, I made the trip to New Orleans, staying a few days, where for once in my life I was a little extravagant, buying silk vest, $10.00, silk umbrella, $10.00, walking cane, $10.00 and some other fine articles. I boarded a large splendid boat, The Great Republic, had large staterooms, different hours for meals, Bills of Fare, small tables, so one could eat alone, and most splendid fare. It was not a fast boat, but one of the finest on the river. The eight hundred miles from New Orleans to Memphis was made in due time. I remained there one night and took the train for Nashville and Gallatin. Arriving in Gallatin, I went to Aunt Patsy Gray's where I intended to spend most of the summer and how well I remember my reception.

            Instead of going an the front porch, I went around to the ell gallery and walked in. Two ladies were visitors, Mrs. Coun and Mrs. Elkins, but when my aunt saw me she rose quickly and putting her arms around me and kissing me, began to cry with joy. You see, I was the son of the baby sister who died so early in life. The visitors soon departed, and then the happy talk all around. I was given a nice big room to myself, and memory often dwells upon that happy summer.

            Next day, Mary and myself, no, I think we went that night, over to Uncle Tom's to see them all, and what a great

somebody I was to them all, as it had been nine years since I had bid them goodbye, in the summer of 1861.

            I cannot dwell on the memory of that, the happiest summer of my life, since I have been grown; Mary Gray was especially good and kind to me all the time. I took Uncle Tom Moss down to Nashville with me and spent a night with John Gray. Also took three young ladies to Nashville, we visited the Maxwell House parlor, had music and a nice supper at a restaurant.

            I received letters from my father in La. saying my business was prospering, then came one saying my fine horse had been killed, but I was doing well and did not allow that to worry me in the least.

            Towards the last of the summer, I bought a nice driving horse and later on bought two well bred mares from the Frakes family, paying two hundred and twenty five dollars a piece for them.

            I showed them to Mary and we named them all, Ashby, Mollie Gray and May Beverly, the last after a character in "Surry of Eagle Nest", by John Esten Cook, a good part of which book I read aloud to Mary as we sat in the cool west hall.

            I went over to Uncle Tom's every few days and all night sometimes.

            In the fall, I bade them all goodbye, had my horses taken down to Nashville and shipped on a small steamboat down the Cumberland and to Cairo, Illinois, when I shipped and took passage on a large boat to New Orleans. I had a man to attend to the horses.

            Arriving in New Orleans, I had to ship again on train to Morgan City and from there on boat up the Bayou Teche' to Centerville and then ride down to the plantation where my store was.

            Pa was on the wharf when the boat landed and horses taken off, and all admired the horses, and Tom Vinson was somebody again, just arrived from his summer visit to Tenn.

            My business had prospered and taking an inventory of my stock, went down to New Orleans the 10th of Jan. and bought more goods, and did business until Jan. 1st, when taking stock again, found I had made from 10th Oct. to Jan. 1st, $1,000 in two months and twenty days. That winter, I sent Aunt Patsy a half barrel of syrup and a barrel of oranges, and Uncle Tom a barrel of sugar, half barrel of syrup and barrel of oranges, and that and the weight costing over one hundred dollars.

            I sold my store to Pa and in the spring of 1871, went to Tenn. staying with Aunt Patsy and Uncle Tom, and was married on the 24th of August. My aunts were all at the wedding. We went to Bowling Green, saw Walter Baker and some of the family and that evening to Memphis. Left next day and arrived in New Orleans next day, remaining there one day, left and arrived in Centerville same day. Had intended going to Uncle Douglas' as they were looking for us, but Pa being on the wharf when the boat landed, went down to North Bend, my nice horse and buggy all hitched up and ready when we arrived. I had bought that in New Orleans and shipped up ahead of me.

            Remained at North Bend a day or two, then to Aunt Corina's. Bought nice place and house from Jesse Lacy, put up store, went to New Orleans, bought goods, and all things for housekeeping. Was doing very well. Was close to neighbors, friends had called. Lady became sick and dissatisfied. Had to sell out everything and return to Tenn. Was boarding at E.O. Buchanan's when Jennie was born, May 27, 1872. All my aunts were in attendance.

            Then moved to cottage opposite Mrs. Moore's; made investments and lost, returned to La. in the fall of 1873, took charge of store again, had nice home and buggy again.

            Remained at North Bend until spring of 1874, when we returned to Tenn. on a visit. Returned to La. in fall of '74 to North Bend and had charge of store. Remained there until spring of '75, when my father requested me to move on account of disturbance. Went to Mr. Garrett's, sold my fine saddle horse I had bought in '74 in Tenn.

            Bought store from Wm. Cary on Grand Woods plantation on Bayou Teche' below Centerville. Also built trading boat for store on the Teche'. Opened store in Centerville, built a nice house of five rooms and hall, with front and back gallery, kitchen, store room, cistern, etc., all well furnished, cost about $3,000 in 1877.

            In about 1880, the yellow fever appeared some ten miles south of us and upon the advice of our physician, we left for Tenn.

            Will go back a year or two and state that Annie was born soon after moving to Centerville and Rona near two years later.

            Arriving in Tenn., we never returned to La. to live, but I returned to settle up some business and saw my father the last time and returned to Tenn.

            Lived five years in two story brick house on E. Main St. Judge S. Prank Wilson, while a candidate for governor, and wife, boarded with us for nearly a year.

            I had a store at time on North Water St., did well, but the clerk robbed me of a good deal all the while. My little girl, Lorena, died in March, while living at the brick house.

            Moved and lived in a house on College and Franklin Sts. for one or two years, and then built a house on Gray St. and moved again. Had very nice little home, chickens, good garden and always a good cook and lots of company. During the time I lived in the College St. house and one I built, I visited my brother in Texas four times, and visited Willie Douglas at Caldwell and my half-sister, Mallie, in Cameron once.

            I cannot write of the personal experiences of my life during the latter part of my life in Gallatin. While I had lost good money with which I came to Gallatin, my family always lived in good houses and were well provided for and always had a servant.

I was honored and elected several times to city offices in Gallatin, City Recorder, Tax Collector, and did clerical work at same time for others, and appointed Coal Oil Inspector twice by Gov. Robt. L. Taylor, Judge Wilson and Hon. Julius S. Trousdale being my friends in the legislature at the time.

            My daughter Jennie having married and Annie being in her middle teens, and she and her mother having a good little home well furnished, I obtained a divorce and left Gallatin for Thomasville, Ga. in August, 1897.

            Arriving in Thomasville with very little money, I wrote to the Cumberland Mills in Nashville for samples of flour, meal and grits, to try my hand at the brokerage business. The samples came and in three months I had succeeded so well that the mills began shipping their products to me by the car load on consignment, to be sold on a brokerage. They soon paid the rent for a store in which to keep the goods, paid the license and the drayage from depot to store, and they shipped me in that way for five or six years. I made a little money and soon began to add some other goods, hams, sugar, rice, etc. on my own account, and succeeded very well with it all. In Sept. 1899, a little over a year after I had landed in ThomasvilIe, Dorothy having been born, and about a year old, I received a letter from Jennie saying the baby was very sick, and hoped I could come to see them.

            I left next morning for Gallatin, arriving second morning to see them first time in two years, longer than I had ever been away before. Annie soon came over to see me.

            I remained about a week and Dorothy improving a little, I was compelled to bid a sorrowful goodbye and return to my

business.

            In 1900, Annie came down to see me and in the summer I took her back with me to Tenn. on a visit, remaining about

two months, myself with Jennie and Harry on Franklin St. and she with her mother and Jennie.

            I bought Jennie a sewing machine which she kept and used twenty years or more.

            I now forget in which month we returned to Thomasville. I had left my business in good hands during my absence and it was all right.

            The next year, 1901, I closed out my business and I took Annie with me to New Orleans. I forget how long we stayed at Aunt Corine' s, maybe a month. We left and I returned to Thomasville and she returned to Gallatin. I am not sure, but I think the next time I returned to Gallatin was in 1903, soon after Harry died, did not stay long and returned to Thomasville.

**Epilogue**

VINSON FAMILY HISTORY

Further Details Omitted from Record of T. S. Vinson

By Unknown Author

According to his tombstone, Captain James Vinson was born on May 20, 1764. If, then, his title of captain is legitimate, he would have been no more than 20 at the time the Revolutionary War ended and would have been a very young captain indeed. He died on May 11, 1822, nine days before his 58th birthday.

His wife was Rhoda Benthall, daughter of Enos and Mary Lassater Benthall. It is barely possible that Mary Lassater Benthall is Enos' mother rather than his wife. Rhoda seems to have had three brothers, Willis, Daniel and Laban, although they may have been her uncles; there is some confusion on this point. She was born July 8, 1761, so she was almost three years older than Captain James. She died August 11, 1836 at the age of 75. Captain James is listed as the executor of his father-in-law, Enos' will.

Captain James and Rhoda had at least three more children besides the three sons Uncle Tom mentions. There was a James, Jr. The best evidence found so far is that he was born sometime between 1790 and 1793. He died after 1830 as he is listed in the 1830 census as a head-of-household. The 1820 and 1830 censuses together seem to indicate that he had at least nine children, eight boys and one girl. One of the two older boys apparently died between 1820 and 1830. Why Uncle Tom wasn't aware of him is a mystery unless he just didn't know to distinguish him from among the various James Vinsons; however, he was close enough to his Grandpa Stockley that he should have known of his brother, James.

There was a daughter, Parthena, who married a man named McCall, and a daughter, Susannah, who married James Hamilton. It is also possible that there was a daughter, Rhoda, although the only time her name has been found in any records so far is that she married Harry Clark on September 11, 1809. She might not be a child of Captain James and Rhoda, the only reason for thinking she is being her name. There was also a Henry Vinson of a similar age to Captain James living in Sumner County. Whether or not he was related to Captain James has not been determined, but this Rhoda could be related to him. There were also a George and a Willie Vinson living in Sumner County, but there is no evidence that they were descended from Captain James in any way. The nearest possible relation is that they were sons of Henry, and Henry and Captain James were brothers.

Captain James also had an illegitimate son, Edmond. He apparently went by the name Vinson and probably did not live in Sumner County, but he was left some property by his father in his will. There is no indication as to who his mother was or when he was born.

To fill in a little of the history of Benthall which Uncle Tom knew nothing of, he married Jane Patton on November 13, 1803, and they apparently had at least four children. There were James, Eveline, and Louisiana (who married a man named Bacard) and another boy. These are listed in the 1820 census. Jane is listed as head-of-household in the 1830 census, so Benthall must have died by this time. The Patton family appears to have been a fairly prominent family of Sumner County.

Enos did not marry a "Bloodworth" as Uncle Tom suggests. His wife's name was Charity Baldridge. [It is likely that Uncle Tom's confusion on this point is due to the fact that on December 8, 1804 Mary Baldridge (Charity's sister?) married Webb Bloodworth. Tom had probably heard one of the daughters refer to an Uncle Webb Bloodworth or an Aunt Mary Bloodworth.] Charity was born March 20, 1792, and she and Enos were married on July 22, 1812. She died May 15, 1829. Besides the two boys Uncle Tom mentions, James and Carroll, it is possible that the grave in the family cemetery near Gallatin of a "Turner B." was their child. This boy was born July 10, 1815 and died January 26, 1835. The 1820 and 1830 censuses both list Enos as having three boys in the appropriate age brackets for Turner to be their child. Then, of course, they had the daughters Eliza, [Rhoda] Jane, and Parthena [A.] whom Uncle Tom mentions.

Although Uncle Tom implies that Enos' son James moved to Louisiana after his marriage in 1845 and says that Carroll moved to Louisiana in approximately 1848, evidence suggests that possibly Enos himself had moved to Louisiana with his whole family at a much earlier date. The evidence is that Eliza Vinson and Daniel Sparks were married in St. Mary's Parish, Louisiana on May 29, 1841; Parthena A. Vinson and William Garrett were married in St. Mary's Parish, Louisiana on December 19, 1839; and Rhoda Jan[e] Vinson was married to Samuel Kemper in St. Mary's Parish, Louisiana on March 13, 1838. Clearly, Enos' unmarried daughters were living in Louisiana well before Uncle Tom credits either their brothers or his grandfather ("My grandfather partly raised or provided for the daughters, their father dying before they were quite grown.") with being in Louisiana. In that day and age, young, unmarried girls would not normally move to another state unaccompanied by some family member. Since their mother died in 1829 and was buried in the family cemetery in Gallatin, but Enos was not, it is possible he moved with his children to Louisiana after his wife died (or after the death of his 20-year-old son Turner?). Of course, he could have been dead, his gravestone having been missing from the family plot by the time the cemetery census was done or for some unknown reason not having been buried there, and the girls sent to Louisiana to live with some other relative after they were orphaned (which might explain why Stockley cared for them for a time). However, we know for certain that Enos was still alive and living with his children in Sumner County in 1830.

The only other information garnered about Captain James' children is that Susannah married James Hamilton on April 8, 1806. James was an adopted son of John Hamilton, the Hamiltons being another prominent Sumner County family, and they seem to have had at least seven children, five boys and two girls.

Now regarding our direct ancestor, Stokely. For starters, his name is spelled several different ways in various records. Although Uncle Tom spelled it Stokely in his history, it was spelled Stockley in Captain James' will. There are many errors in spelling in transcribing the old documents to type. Benthall is recorded as Beuthall in the Sumner County, Tennessee Abstracts of Will Books 1 & 2 (1788-1842). This is an easy error to understand made by someone reading the script of that day who did not know the family history personally. Similarly, the list of marriages in St. Mary's Parish, Louisiana gives Parthena's name as Pasthena. However, it would take a little more of a stretch to misread Stokely as Stockley. Further, it is spelled Stockley in several other sources. It seems likely that the name was originally Stockley, but somewhere between him and Stokely Texas or Thomas Stokely the spelling got changed. It would be worthwhile if the origin of the name "Stockley" within the family could be discovered. It might be, for instance, the maiden name of Captain James' mother.

Although Uncle Tom apparently knew his grandmother as "Sarah", the marriage records list her as Sallie. (Note that Aunt Fleetwood's name is Sallie Fleetwood.) She was married to Stockley on March 9, 1816. The inference can be drawn that the two of them were still living under Captain James' roof in 1820 and did not yet have any children of their own, although this cannot be proven for certain. A young man and young woman of their approximate ages were living in Captain James' household at the time of the 1820 census, and Stockley is not listed separately in the census as a head-of-household. It seems likely that Stockley and Sarah are the young man and woman mentioned. Benthall, Enos, James, Jr., and James (Susannah) Hamilton are all listed separately as heads of households and Parthena is probably the girl between the ages of 10 and 16 listed in Captain James' household.

Probably the most interesting fact gleaned about Stockley, especially interesting because Uncle Tom fails to mention it, is that in December of 1869 he married a woman named Emma who was born in North Carolina. It would seem that he and Sarah moved to Belton, Bell county, Texas sometime in the 1860s where Sarah died, as Uncle Tom states. Although he tells of his Grandpa living until 1880 when he was 84, he never mentions his second wife, Emma. At the time of their marriage, Stockley was 72 and Emma was 54.

So far, no mention of any "Fleetwoods" has been found anywhere except for a Hardy Fleetwood between the ages of 20 and 30 in the Sumner County 1830 census. This could certainly be a brother of Sarah's, but without other links, this would be difficult to establish.

As our ancestor, Lorenzo Dow, was the oldest son of Stockley and Sarah, we will skip him and return to him later. Quoting Uncle Tom, "Stokely Texas was a tall good-looking man. He married Josephine Leonard a year or two before the Civil War..." The marriage records for St. Mary's Parish list stokely Vinson marrying Uranie Leonard on July 25, 1859. Presumably her name was Uranie Josephine Leonard, the records listing her first name, but she probably went by Josephine. With a name like that, wouldn't you?

The sidelight that Stokely was named Stokely "Texas" because Grandpa was away in Texas at the time of his birth is very interesting. His birthdate has not yet been established, but it must have been sometime around 1825. At that date settlers were just beginning to move into Texas. The Old Three Hundred would have just arrived. So the question arises: For what purpose did Stockley travel to Texas at that time?

The 1830 census raises several questions. The ages of the children listed are difficult to fit with the children Uncle Tom tells us about. The census indicates the following people residing in the household of Grandpa Stockley: Two men between the ages of 30 and 40 (Stockley and ?), one male between 15 and 20 (?), one male between 10 and 15 (If Stockley and Sarah had no children at the time the 1820 census was taken, then this child might barely be Lorenzo Dow; he could have been born in 1820 after the census taker's visit.), two males under five years of age (who could be Stokely Texas and Gideon Blackburn), one woman between the ages of 60 and 70 (Stockley's mother, Rhoda?, or maybe Sarah's mother?), one woman between 30 and 40 (undoubtedly Sarah), and three females between the ages of 5 and 10 (but Uncle Tom only mentions two daughters and indicates that one of them was much younger than this). So we must wonder who the man was near Stockley's age, who the teenage boy is, who the older woman is, and who two of the three young girls are. (One is apparently Caroline.) Whether further research will provide answers is doubtful since early censuses did not list individual names other than the head-of-household. It does seem very likely that the older woman is Rhoda since we know she was still living at this time, she is not listed as a head-of-household, and she is clearly not listed as residing with any of the other Vinson children (Harry Clark and James Hamilton having not yet been located on the 1830 census).

Uncle Tom says that Gideon Blackburn married Martha Fennessee in @ 1830, but he moved with Grandpa Stockley and Grandma Sarah to Texas during the war and was living with Grandpa and Emma in Bell County in 1870. The fate of Martha is unknown.

So far no information beyond that given by Uncle Tom has been unearthed regarding Robert Boyers, Alfred Douglas, Caroline or Caledonia.

John Hall Vinson was married to Mary E. Wright sometime before 1870 because they have been found to have been living in Houston County, Texas in 1870. John is listed as a farmer and Mary as a housewife. Octavia J(ane) later to become our great-grandmother was 16 at the time and her sister Mary S(tuart) was 14. Mary E.'s first husband (Jenny and Mary's father) was John Wright. They were already living in Houston County in 1860 when Jane was 7 and Mary was 4. At that time they had an older brother, william, 10. He either died sometime in the ensuing ten years, as, presumably, did their father, or married and/or moved away. (Maybe he didn't approve of his mother's second marriage. Rebellious teenagers can be that way.) John Wright was also a farmer. He was born in South Carolina and Mary was born in Tennessee. So far there has been no way to trace Mary's maiden name. John Wright and Mary, of course, were our great-great grandparents through Octavia Jane (Jenny), and Mary's second husband, John Hall Vinson was our great-great-great uncle through Jenny's husband, Lorenzo Sue Vinson. Also Jenny's sister, Mary Stuart, married William Douglas, who was John Hall and Lorenzo Dow's nephew through their sister Caroline. Mary E. Wright was three years younger than John Wright, but two years older than John Hall Vinson.

Now, our great-great-grandfather, Lorenzo Dow Vinson was probably born in late 1820. His first wife, Susan Courtney Moss, was born on September 15, 1923 and died on January 30, 1848, at the age of 24, fifteen days after the birth of her third son and our great-grandfather, Lorenzo Sue (Bud) Vinson. All searching done so far has failed to turn up any facts regarding her family. Moss is certainly not an uncommon name, and who can know what Mosses may be related? A John Moss married a Polly Stevenson on August 31, 1805, but this cannot be the brother to whom Uncle Tom refers because that would have been the approximate time of his birth. A five-year-old boy, Cato Moss, died of cholera in Sumner County, Tennessee in July of 1850. This might be Susan's nephew, son of her brother Thomas. According to Uncle Tom, Susan had only two brothers: Thomas, and John who died of cholera in 1841 and therefore could not be the father of this child.

Our Uncle Tom is less than candid about his own history. He assumes, of course, that his daughter Annie who instigated this history already knows the story behind his problems, and so omits many details. He leaves tantalizing gaps for his descendants to wonder about. Some wonderful lady, whose name was not properly recorded, tramped all over Sumner County reading tombstones and recording the information she found, including the exact location of the various cemeteries. This was the source of much of the information regarding birth and death dates of past Vinsons. In fact, there is one tombstone in the Vinson family cemetery of a young man whose placement in the family is yet to be determined [Mr. William Vinson - December 11, 1812-June 14, 1840]. In any case, this was the eventual source of the elusive name of Uncle Tom's wife. She was born on November 10, 1849 and died on February 8, 1925, and her name was Jennie E. Baker. She is buried in the Gallatin Cemetery. Uncle Tom was born September 1, 1843 and died December 10, 1930. Even though these two were separated for many, many years, they are buried together in the cemetery with their beloved daughter Lorena, of whose death Uncle Tom speaks. She was born in September, 1878 and died in March of 1885.

We, of course, have no idea what the problems were that divided this family. Uncle Tom has left it open to all sorts of wild speculation. Too much drinking on his part, and possibly homesickness and finding life in Louisiana more difficult than she cared to deal with on her part seem possibilities. Doubtless we will never know what really happened.

The list of cemeteries in Sumner County is also the source for Susan Courtney Moss' birth and death dates. From here we also learn that Uncle Tom's brother, was not named William Thomas as he says (which would not be likely giving two brothers the same name), but was named William Edwards. He was born October 22, 1845 and died July 25, 1847. Susan would have been pregnant with Lorenzo Sue when she lost this child. It seems our great-great grandmother knew much sorrow in her short life. Perhaps this is the reason she did not survive this last childbirth. Perhaps losing his wife to his son also accounts for the fact that their father seems to have turned the boys' rearing over to his parents.
Our great-grandfather was born on January 15, 1848 and died on November 19, 1915. (Note that this is only six months after the death of our great-grandmother Katie Robinett Smith.) He married his uncle's step-daughter, Octavia Jane (Jenny) Wright on Christmas Day, 1872. She was born on November 18, 1853 and died on May 2, 1902. These dates were very simple to obtain. Their graves are easy to find in the old Oak Grove Cemetery in Huntsville.
Someone obtained a copy of the family pages of the old Vinson Family Bible which provided the final dates necessary to round out what is so far known about the Vinson family. Spouse names are still missing; hopefully, more research will eventually fill in the gaps. William Thomas Vinson - born November 9, 1873, married December 24, 1905, died July 22, 1944; Lorenzo Dow Vinson - born December 31, 1875, died in childhood, probably before 1884; Mary Sue Vinson - born February 21, 1878, married January 5, 1902, death date unknown; Lillian Ella Vinson - born January 28, 1880, died April 13, 1961?; Octavia Daisy Vinson - born July 19, 1882, died September 4, 1945; Wilbourn Gibbs Vinson - born September 30, 1884, married Lilah Stewart smith April 19, 1914, died January 23 (Grandmother always said January 21 and wrote that date in the family Bible.), 1964; Elizabeth Stewart Vinson - born August 12, 1888, death date unknown (must be the child Uncle Tom says died in infancy); Irene Gay Vinson - born October 3, 1890, died June 20, 1913; Melvina - born October 4, 1892, died August 13, 1952; John Wright - born June 5, 1894, death date unknown (Ask Aunt Fleetwood. He was still living in 1964.); and Sallie Fleetwood - born July 28, 1899, still living April 25, 1989.