

My brother and me turned land with a big turning plow. Once when we were doing that, my brother took a chew of tobacco and gave me one, and I got so sick! I never did that again.

My daddy was a molasses maker. My brothers worked all day for a gallon of molasses—not over 25 cents a gallon. We made it for ourselves. We didn't sell it. When you had your cane, you first stripped off all the blades. Then you cut it down and laid it in piles. You'd go along and cut the heads off. Then load it on a wagon [pulled by a team of mules]. The mules were pulling, and it would go round and round.

[How did that work?] Two big wheels met. You put the sugar between the two big wheels and mash the juice out. It would go in the molasses pan. You'd take a paddle and work it from that place to another until you got to the end of the pan. It was a long pan with several trays. Work it back and forth. When you get to the end of the pan, be ready to pour it up. It'd be boiling hot. The long pan had a stopper. You'd take the stopper out and it would pour into a 50-pound lard stand, like a bucket, a galvanized stand. From there, we dipped it into gallon buckets. We'd grow the cane. We made it for ourselves.

We'd have to carry water a mile. Pappa would whistle all the way. He'd carry water, too. When you got to the well, you'd draw the water with a long pipe and a rope.

That was the hardest job I ever done. You'd be burning up, stripping and cutting. The second hardest was cutting firewood. The third was turning land with two mules and a turning plow, and I weighed 98 pounds.

The men would go to the fields and I'd stay home long enough to fix lunch. [What did you fix?] Potatoes and green beans, slaw. Mostly oil and vinegar with the slaw.

Marriage to Frank Chaney

Bernice was a young bride when she went with her husband, Frank Chaney, the son of M.G.'s brother Walter, to live in a tenant house on M.G.'s land. She remembers her Aunt Bertie and Uncle Mabren (M.G.) well. She said with the warmth brought by a good memory in her eyes, "Uncle Mabren loved me and treated me like a daughter."

M.G. Chaney and His Family (Sources: Mac Chaney and Hosea Chaney)

Bertie Pitchford Chaney, wife of Mabren G. (M.G.) Chaney, was born in Alabama in 1892. Both Bernice and Hosea Chaney described Bertie as having a dark complexion and dark hair and the appearance of being an Indian. Mac Chaney said a genealogy