

## Living on the Chaney Place

**Where We Lived.** Bernice Chaney, who is 85 years old [in 2006], said she remembers the M.G. Chaney property “from when I was around 18 years old.” When she and Frank Chaney married, they began married life living in one of the tenant houses. She said:

Uncle Mabren and Aunt Bertie lived in the big house. When we lived on their place, I’d go cook for them. Aunt Bertie loved my egg custard. They had somebody come to do their washing. Uncle Mabren loved to play dominoes.

Bernice said the big stucco house faced south and was not far from the road. The road was dirt and it connected to Old Madison Pike, which was the old road to Madison before the four-lane was built. The barn was behind the house, somewhat, to the northwest. M.G. also owned land on the north side of the road. It was not part of the Army acquisition. She said M.G. also owned land in other areas of Madison County and nearby counties.

Bernice remembers four houses south of the big house. One was larger and better than the others were. “Son” Chaney, who oversaw the property for his father, inhabited the largest of the four houses [for a time]. Bernice said:

There was one better house, which was where Son and his wife Opal lived. He was called Son, and I think that was his name. When they left there, they went to California. The house had two bedrooms and a living room and a kitchen. Son was the overseer of the place.

It is probable that “Son’s” legal name was Mabren, the same as his father’s, but he was always called Son, and that is what is remembered. What is interesting to note is the 1910 U.S. Census shows M.G.’s son Mabren Jr. as being 1 year old, and his son Cecil as being 8 years of age. This fits the tradition wherein the first son is given the name of his paternal grandfather and the second son is named after his father.

The house that Bernice described Son living in was, basically, a four-room house with a front porch. It was larger than the small houses to the south of it, but the construction was the same. It was located north of the two-room tenant houses, closer to the big house.

Bernice and Frank moved into one of the three smaller, two-room houses. Bernice said “back then,” a couple with no children would expect to live in a two-room house. She said there were many houses in the area like the two-room house they lived in. It was typical in size and construction—board and batten with a tin roof. It had one front door and one back door and a small front porch. The other three houses on the southern end of M.G.’s property were the same. The house had no fireplace; it had an old wood stove for cooking and heat. Bernice stated: “It was a little house, sure enough, just big enough for two.”