

and sing a song. In it, he was working on a building for his Lord, but before he finished his song which he accompanied by patting me on the behind with his hand, I would be fast asleep. Then he would carry me to the house and I would wake up when he put me down.

Grandma Amanda would fix us lunch and he would sit down to a big meal of turnip greens, cornbread, potatoes and milk followed by blackberry pie. Before eating, we always said the blessing. After eating, we would take a nap and then head back to the store. I felt like such a big little man. When he closed the store at dark, we would come back home. After supper we would go out on the front porch and I would always sit on Poppa P.'s lap.

Poppa P. Burns' death was a big shock to me. [James P. Burns died of double pneumonia in 1919.] I remember the day of the wake and funeral as if it was today. I was frightened, not by him, but by the thought that they were going to bury him in the ground. Every thing was black that day. The funeral director, Mr. Golson, was a handsome jet black man. The horse was black and so was the hearse [sic]. And everybody was wearing black clothing. I walked along beside the hearse to the graveyard. It was the saddest half-mile of my life. The day was gloomy, the road was bumpy and rough. This was the first time that I had seen anyone buried. When I saw the top of the casket close and his casket lowered into the ground for the first time in my life I felt a terrible feeling of loneliness. I couldn't understand what was happening. It was all so sad and terrible and frightening to a small boy. The ground which had been a source of comfort and pleasure for me, the good earth which had always been my playground, had all of a sudden taken my grandfather from me. I mourned his death for a very long time.

My early childhood, that time of magic, dreams and vivid imagination, gave way with Poppa P.'s death to the growing pains of dealing with real life. The lives around me were changing too. Uncle Oscar Burns found better land and moved to the city of Huntsville, Alabama. Uncle J.P. Burns bought a farm of about 80 acres and built a beautiful six-room house on it. About a half mile away my dad moved us to a bigger farm called the Fendle [Fennell] Place. Approximately 80 acres