

# Ruth Randall, “HOYT: Sketch of William Hoyt Randall’s Life” (July 6, 1910—July 17, 1972)

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ここに紹介するのは、ジョージア州北部のシェア・クロッパーの子に生まれ、結婚にともなって自立した直後に、大恐慌に巻き込まれて苦闘した一人の白人農民の記録である。

故 William Hoyt Randall は、1910年 Franklin County, Georgiaに生まれ、1972年 Cobb County, Georgia で他界した。

1929年から1941年までシェア・クロッパーとして農業に従事、その間に一時 Greenville, South Carolina の木綿工場で働き、その劣悪な労働条件と生活環境に耐えかねて、再びシェア・クロッパーの生活に戻ったこともあったという。その後第二次大戦下の好況期に、鉄鋼業、ついで航空機産業の従業員となり、1972年、在職のまま病氣療養中に62歳で世を去った。

以下は、ジョージアに健在の夫人 Mrs. Ruth Randall に回想を綴っていただき、それを令息の Professor William T. Randall に校閲を煩わした上で掲載するもので、恐慌期の白人シェア・クロッパーの生活や、またニュー・ディール政策と農民とのかかわり、あるいはそのもとでの農民の生活がリアルに描かれて興味深い。恐慌期研究の一助ともなれば幸いである。

Hoyt’s parents were sharecroppers, meaning they did not own the land they were farming. Since he grew up on the farm, he learned to do all types of work. He had an older brother and sister, Randy and Mattie. As a baby, his mother would carry him to field and place him on a pallet under a shade tree, by the time he was four years old, leave him in bed of the morning to sleep as late as he wished, leaving his breakfast on table for him. Then he would come to the field where his mama was working. This particular morning he came running to the field all excited, “Mama, guess what? I washed and dried my dishes for you.” “Baby, what did you dry them with?” “Oh Mama, I dried them with my shirt-tail.” His dad often remarked he was the one to make the family laugh.

Naturally with the entire family working, Hoyt grew up doing everything too. He chopped or ho’d cotton, with a short handle hoe. He picked cotton. When a person picks cotton he wears a pick-sack, with a strap sewn on it, which you throw over your head on to the opposite shoulder. When you get your pick-sack full of cotton you empty

it in a large basket. This is back-bending, also back-breaking work, most especially for adults. All day long, a day on the farm is a Day-like 12 hours!

Hoyt helped pull the fodder in that July weather. Fodder is long blades growing all the way up the cornstalk; regular fieldcorn is tall. One pulled the blades and tied in bundles with one of the blades. Later it was hauled by wagon to barns for stock to eat in winter. They pulled the corn in late fall, and gathered it to put in cribs for stock and meal for corn bread for family. The crib is a building that is not built tight like other farm buildings. It is left with space between planks in floor for corn to have air. Also there are tiny air spaces in sides of crib. When there is no air, corn will ruin.

The cotton picking—Hoyt had to start doing this in early years, too small to do other work. He hated that worst of any work—just a mere mention of cotton-picking—as long as he lived—too much!

Hoyt's early chores consisted of feeding pigs, hogs and chickens. Later on he was permitted to plow, great achievement—getting between those plow handles. And to use those plow lines! One used these to guide the mule. The right you would gently pull and say Gee, Gee. The left you would pull and say Haw, Haw. In spring Hoyt helped his Dad and Randy do all the plowing, getting ready to plant the crop. They planted corn, cotton and peas, sowed syrup cane seed for making syrup for family. During all of this he would go to school all he possibly could, for instance when ground was too wet to work. Did finish (9th) ninth grade which was all this school taught. When he was 14 and Randy 16, Dad gave them a field each to plant cotton. By the end of second year he had enough money to buy a much used Model-T Ford. The cotton paid off, it was worth the back-ache.

In August Hoyt met Ruth Bailey at an August Revival. She had just celebrated her (17th) seventeenth birthday, and he had just turned 18 in July. 1 year later we were married with both our parents blessings.

Marriage: William Hoyt Randall

Annie Ruth Bailey

were united in marriage in home of his sister Mrs. Mattie Oakley of Anderson, S.C. by her Pastor Rev. E. C. White of Anderson, S.C. on August 7, 1929.

Children: Carolyn Jane Randall, July 21, 1930

William Talmadge Randall 11, 1933

When Carolyn was born she was very tiny and frail. She was born in our home, Dr. Brown charged \$15.00 which we paid.

When Bill was born, 1-11-1933, Dr. Ridgeway said, "I will not ask for any money, just give me something my family can eat." He accepted a pig.

Bill weighed in at 7 lbs., most perfect baby and later the very best baby. Sleeping, at night—we thought was a miracle. At 2 years of age we were still having to be up some with Carolyn. See, in 1929 Herbert Hoover was elected President of the United States. Less than a year after he was elected, Stock Market crashed, banks closing, men committing suicide.

Now Carolyn was born the very year the Great Depression struck in full force. And Hoyt with a wife and sick baby that needed a heart specialist—no specialist—no money. Up until July of this year [1930] most sharecroppers and some of the landowners were just hard working poor people. Suddenly every one was PORE.

By now Hoyt & Ruth and baby Carolyn were in a tenant house sharecropping. Only we didn't own our stock. We were farming on halves. In other words he split every thing down the middle. The land owner one half, Hoyt one half. When he would get his crops all worked, would try to find a day's work. If he could get work it was forty-cents a day, and a day was sun-up to sun-down those days. Sold his much loved Model-T, or swapped for 2 pigs. But those 2 pigs made very fine hogs and sure turued into a lot of food for us. We canned sausage, ribs, backbones and tender-loin. Tender-loin today is cut into center-cut pork chops. We sugar-cured the ham and shoulders and made much lard with the fat. Packed all the rest in salt and packed in big wooden boxes in a building that was especially built for curing pork. Since the cars just disappeared, people were going in wagons to town, church and visiting relatives. A wagon was a necessity for a farmer. But now almost every family used them. It was practically the only mode of travel.

Lot of times Hoyt would be rocking Carolyn and say, "If, If, If." Depression Cut Deep into a man's soul. No where to turn. He planted a big garden, all vegetables that could be grown. We canned lots 'n lots for winter. And my father had a fruit orchard, since he owned his land. He always gave us all the fruits we wanted to eat, also to can and dry. We did lots of both. We dried just bushels of peaches & apples, especially peaches. They were very good in the cold winter months. Food we had. Money we did not.

One day Hoyt came in and said. "Well Ruthie, didn't think times could get any worse. But they will. Mr. Boll Weevil is paying us a visit." The Boll Weevil is an insect who feeds on the cotton bolls and buds. Only it was not a visit. He came and stayed.

To get rid of them was the nastiest job we ever had. Hoyt learned the best way to kill them, to poison them, was to buy a special poison and black molasses then mix with water. He made mops by: getting a stick 12" to 18" long, then wrap one end with rags, fill a bucket with mixture, mop in one hand, a bucket of mixture in other hand. Dip—mop cotton plant or buds. Dip—mop, dip—mop, all day long. Can't you just see the spatter from that bucket, then as one brushed on the cotton boll another spatter. Smelly! Smelly! One looked like the Ginger Bread Man. By nite only this was the Molasses Man. Clothes getting stickier and stiffer as the day wore on. What was the use to wash these clothes? Stand them in corner and step in next morning. One already needed that #3 wash-tub Saturday nite bath.

A dear neighbor Mr. Bob Harrison asked Hoyt how about working for him and use his tractor in his fields five days a week, \$16.00 a month. At this time any thing to get out of that cotton field.

Later the Government began to open up some jobs: the C. C. Camps, the W.P.A. All the work was extremely hard labor. But Hoyt went to work with W.P.A. cleaning river bed and banks, creeks in the same manner and building roads with picks and shovels and wheel barrows. One road was through a mountain of rock up "Curahee Mountain" to Toccoa Falls, Ga. Hoyt would come home hands blistered badly in spite of wearing gloves, get up and go back the next morning. In spite of the hard work. very few people quit their job. All the work they offered was equally as bad, pay low—but it was money. And as he would say, honest work. Somehow in all these hard jobs, and odd day's work, he saved enough money to buy Carolyn and Bill a bicycle. Bought only one for both and it was a girl's Bike. They both enjoyed it immensely. Bill never complained. Hoyt was so proud of his boy, saying God never gave a father a better boy. Then he just threw in all that good health for good measure. When he accepted call to go in ministry he was beside himself with pride. Never got over being thankful to God.

By mid-thirties the cars having disappeared, the men and boys made "Hoover-Buggies" using 2 car wheels and tires with one seat for two people. This "Hoover-Buggy" was pulled by a horse or mule—Sunday afternoon's entertainment. On Saturday afternoons Hoyt did "Barbering." Cut the men and boys hair for 10¢. Cut the ladies and children free. Had always kept the children and my hair cut.

Carolyn and Bill grew up in midst of these hardships. We walked to nearest church. Some times Daddy having one in each arm. He kept his humor through all the bad

time. Same happy person, the capacity to make others happy with him. For the most people were happy.

In 1941 R. G. LeTourneau built a steel plant in Toccoa, Ga. He built only large type equipment, already had a plant in Peoria, Ill., Mr. LeTourneau opened a Trainee School paying 10 ¢ per hour in turn if you then worked for him. Hoyt took the training then went to work as an inspector.

Soon afterwards we carried Carolyn to Emory Hospital in Atlanta, Ga. for diagnosis. The diagnosis was not good. If they could have seen her when she was a baby, they could have operated, but now, "No"—she had four heart defects. And we had waited for this, her only chance to live! Remember, she was born in 1930, so we waited eleven long years, no money. These scars never heal, nor the hurt, nor even the anger he would say.

Now working at LeTourneau Steel Plant and were in our first home in Toccoa near the plant. Had also bought a used car. And we were seeing the children enjoy so much that all children enjoy. We could all go to Saturday afternoon movies, eat pop-corn, hot dogs, see a movie at same time.

At times Hoyt would say, "Now, I am beginning to believe the Great Depression is over." And other times he would say, "I know I have just slept and woke up in Heaven."

Just as LeTourneau was phasing out, the Lockheed Aircraft had built in Mariette, Ga. Hoyt and I went to apply for employment. He was hired that same day, as an inspector in Aircraft. We moved to Mariette, Ga. He was "Quality Control" inspector 20 yrs until retirement, and I was in Blue-Print.

We had twenty-one years there, very happy years. Hoyt's greatest attribute or gift from God was humor under all circumstances, and the capacity to love every one.

Mrs. Ruth Randall, 6-1-1991

[Document] Ruth Randall, "HOYT : Sketch of  
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