

# Mrs. Charlotte Adams

By Minonja Moss

One day when the sky had a light blue canvas with the sun at its horizon, I sat down with my aunt Charlotte Adams; you will know her as Mrs. Charlotte Adams. We sat down in the living room of her cozy little house. It was nice and warm because it was cold outside. She has a round plump face that has caring all over it, her eyes is brown and sits behind her small frame eyeglasses. She speaks softly and very lovely and she loves when people come and sit with her.



Charlotte Adams was born on October 8, 1919. He parent's names were Charlie and Narciss Peed. She grew up in the small town of Aurora, North Carolina.

When she was a child her parents tended farm land for Nat Hooker, Wallder Hooker, and there was no relationship between the two. They didn't live that far from her father. "Daddy tended right much land because he had nine children." She had to go to school and help her father tend

the land. She attended S.W.Snowden, and she attended there until the 7<sup>th</sup> grade when she had to drop out. When she dropped out she had to help her father (Charlie) work on the farm. She had two sisters that also had to drop out to help on the farm. The other children were not old enough to work in the farm. The school was smaller than the school is now. It was about four different teachers in the building that she was in and they had “right many students in the building.” She told me that when she was in school her favorite subject in school was spelling and math. She loved going to school. The only thing that she didn’t like was that she had to walk two to three miles a day to get to school “even if it was sun shine or rain,” because there was no buses. When she was in school she told me that she used to play baseball, ring around the roses; hop scotch, “running right down behind one another to see who could run the fastest.” That was fun to her. She said that there are some differences now from back then seeing that children didn’t have to walk to school and they had cars to get to school and where ever else they wanted to go. They only had one school in Aurora then and now they have two schools. And they aren’t cold when they get to school because they don’t have to walk two or three miles to get to school in the winter. If they weren’t on time they would get into trouble. For example, they would get a wipping or they had to stand in the corner. “That’s all that I remember about punishment in school cause I wont that bad.” Her parents, brother, and sisters and she lived on Peedtown road until their house burned down then they “move up the creek.” Even when they moved her daddy kept on tending the farm and he tended for Mr. Hooker. Her father had to use a mule and plow to till the land before he could plant the crops. They had to get around town in a horse and cart or a

horse and buggy. She said “very few people had cars.”



This is me enjoying the memory

Her mother did other work besides taking care of the family and working on the farm, she washed cloths for three different families and they were Broom, Hooker, and Bonner. That meant that Aunt Charlotte and two of my other aunts had to walk five miles to get the clothes then take them to Narciss (their mother) and she would wash them and fold them, then they had to take the clothes back to the three different families and that meant that they had to walk ten miles altogether, there and back home.

They only had one boy and he was the baby of the family. So he didn't have to help out much on the farm that much. The girls were the oldest so they had to do the work that meant that they had to work on the farm a lot more.

When she turned twenty she went to Philadelphia. When she got there she moved in with her older sister and she started to work at a pants factory. She left her two kids with her mother until she came back. Her children's names were Mabel and Clarence and they both attended S.W. Snowden that is what they did while she She worked to the pants factory for about 5 years and then she moved back home. Then when she came back home she got married. She married a man named Ellis Hamilton.

Mrs. Adams attended Weeping Rachael Freewill Baptist Church. Aunt Charlotte was a trustee in the church for about three or four years. She ushered in the church and then she went to the choir until she got sick then she hasn't been in anything since then. The church is now called Peed Town Baptist Church. She attended that church since she was a little girl with her family.

Charlotte said back then white was white and black was black and that meant there was no mixing of the two. Blacks use to work for the whites in the kitchen, cleaning, and taking care of the children. Mrs. Adams use to work in the kitchen for a white family. She was single while she was working for this family.

Next she (charlotte) got married and began tending a farm. At this point the farms were not theirs (her and her husband) they tended for a man named Mr. Midgette. They grew corn, beans, white potatoes, sweet potatoes, cotton, and cucumber. She said it was about 35 acres of farm land. Not only working on the farm she had two small children that she had to raise, and then to add to all of this she worked at an oyster house and a crab house. She said that "she worked a many many of hours." The most of the week she worked at the crab or oyster house when she wasn't needed on the farm.

This was  
some of the  
land that  
she owned.



Then she added hogs and cows to the farm. Right after adding the animals she brought the farm from Mr. Midgette. The cows were milking cows. She didn't sell the milk from the cows they kept the milk for the family and gave some to Mr. Midgette. The cows would feed off of an empty field. They would have babies and they would give them to Mr. Midgette. The hogs she kept until they reached 250 lbs then she sold them. They kept some of the hogs for the family. They made sausages, bacon and anything else they could get off of the hog except hog head cheese. The corn that was grown on the farm was grown just to feed the hogs.

The reason that they had cotton was because her husband wanted to grow it. He wanted to grow it because you could get a lot of money for it and that help put things on the farm. Working with cotton they had to hire people to help to do the cotton because they weighed it out everyday to see how much they had. Aunt Charlotte and my grandmother, which was her sister;



her name was Minnie Moss worked together to make sure that the cotton was being picked correctly. Then the cotton was taken to the cotton gin, which was located in Washington, NC. It was put into bales and then they would leave after they were put into bales, because they would get paid at that point.

Everything that she grew she said except the corn she sold, which was used to feed the hogs. She also grew a large garden for her family and her sister's family. She told me that back then family was very close. Her and her sister took turns taking care of each other children. She said that today families are close but not as close like they use to be because people don't want to look out for each other, they just want to try to out do each other in many ways. She tended land for about fifteen years before she sold the land to Texas Gulf, which is now named PCS Phosphate. After she sold the land she went on to work at the crab and oyster house full time.



This is some of the land that she sold to Texas Gulf.

She also said that she keep the garden that she had. That was fresh vegetables for the family. She told me that the vegetables were also used for family get to gathers. She remembers that when the whole family got together they had “a plenty of food.’ They always went to different houses within in the family they always had fun and enjoyed the time that was spend with each other. She went on to tell me how back then family was a lot closer. Aunt Charlotte said that families back in the old days were closer because they helped each other in the farm, with the children and any other way that they were needed. Today the families don’t do that much for each other they walk around trying to out do on another, and then when you need them they always come up with an excuse to not have to help you do something.

Her children once they got older started there own families. Her daughter (Mabel) had eight children and she worked on a farm then when she left the farm she went to the crab house and worked there. Her son (Clarence) went to work at Texas Gulf, which is now called PSC Phosphate. He got married and had four children. They all live close together and they still share that bond that has been in the family for many years. Even when her children got older and had their own children she kept on growing her garden until her husband died. Then she stopped growing a garden.

A year or so later after her husband Mr. Ellis died she remarried a man named Oscar. Mr. Oscar worked at the school as a janitor. He didn’t do any kind of farming just work at the school. Aunt Charlotte gave up all of the farming and worked at the crab house and oyster house until she “took off and got sick.”

She enjoyed working at the crab house, and oyster house and farming. “All the things that I did I enjoyed.” After she stopped farming she enjoyed taking care of house work. She also helped raise her grandchildren. She has twelve grandchildren, twelve great grandchildren, and

she has nine great-great grandchildren. When they all get together every Christmas “we have a house full.”

While talking to her grandson Stewart Ham, he was telling me how she used to tend land in a place that they use to call “new town”. That was also land that Mr. Midgette owned and she tended it for a while. But when you go over to the “new land” they have now built house on it. Stewart how she raised animals and she had a cow named “Lil Sue.” She was in a picking crab contest in Morehead City and she won a television. She was the fastest crab picker in the Aurora packing company. She tended two gardens one behind her house and then one beside her daughter’s house. Her house used to be two stories and then when they remodeled the house they took the top story off. He told me how she has two birthdays and that is because of the mix up within the court house. Aunt Charlotte said that she on celebrates the birthday in October.



Stewart taking a trip down memory lane



While talking to my aunt Charlotte I learned a lot about my great grand parents and how things were in the olden days. She was a very hard worker and she loved her family very much. I want to be half of what she is at her age. This woman has showed that she has done a lot in her life time. She has put a new point of view on a hard worker, she didn't mind working when and where she was needed. Made sure that she had and her family has things that were needed. I have really enjoyed talking to my aunt and learning things that I didn't know about her and about how things were back in the old days.