

A TEACHER'S TALE: THE DIARY OF NANNIE

DORROH ODOM, 1894-1904

by

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A THESIS

IN

HISTORY

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	ii
LIST OF FIGURES	v
CHAPTER	
I. INTRODUCTION	1
II. FRIENDSHIP AND COURTSHIP	13
III. IDENTITY AND IDEOLOGY	59
IV. THE RURAL TEACHER AND THE RURAL SCHOOL	102
V. CONCLUSION	146
BIBLIOGRAPHY	157

LIST OF FIGURES

2.1	Map of Northern Hays County	14
2.2	Map of Southern Hays County	15
4.1	Schedule from a One-Room School in Milam County	123

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Nannie Dorroh Odom began writing her diary in 1894 when she embarked on her first and only term in high school. The diary traces her life from girlhood at age eighteen, through teaching as a young adult, to becoming the wife of her lifelong friend, Albert Odom, in 1904. Nannie recorded her attitude and experiences as a young woman, a teacher, a daughter, and a member of a prosperous Anglo rural community. The diary describes the responsibilities and recreation of rural, middle-class youth; the economic, political, and social opportunities for rural, middle-class white women; the pervasive racism of the period; and the working conditions rural teachers endured. Nannie's close friend, Lucy Black Martin, also taught in the Driftwood area and participated in the same social circle as Nannie. She married Nannie's uncle, Tom Martin, in 1899. Perhaps following the lead of her friend, Lucy also kept a diary throughout 1898. Lucy's diary helps provide an additional perspective to the picture Nannie painted of her community.

Nannie lived along Onion Creek in the community of Driftwood, Texas. Driftwood sat on the eastern edge of the Edwards Plateau in northern Hays County. The craggy bluffs, rolling hills, wild flowers, green meadows, coniferous trees, creeks and natural springs provided the hill country with some of the most scenic views in Texas. Hays County grew rapidly at the close of the nineteenth century. The United States Census of 1850 listed the entire population of the county at only 387. In the following decade, the population expanded by almost 450 percent to 2126, and by 1880 the

population escalated another 255 percent to 7555. Hays County claimed 14,142 residents by 1900 after which population growth stagnated until the mid twentieth century. In 1826 the nascent Mexican government first granted permission to empresario Ben Milam to colonize the land between the Guadalupe and Colorado Rivers. When at least one hundred families settled, individuals could receive title to their land claims.¹ A twenty-nine year old widow from Virginia, Freelove Woody, first appropriated the land where the Driftwood church, cemetery, and post office would one day be located.² Because she could not afford to have her land surveyed, Woody agreed to give William Cannon half of her property if he would bear the expense of surveying for her. Although Woody eventually sold her remaining acreage, William Cannon remained in the area.³ The southern portion of Driftwood, named Bluff Springs, was originally part of the William Barrett Travis League. After Travis died in the Battle of the Alamo, his two children inherited the land but never lived in the area themselves. The son, Charles Travis, bought his sister's half and then sold the land for a loss to M. C. Hamilton.⁴

After the initial grants of land, the cypress trees which grew in abundance along the banks of Onion Creek served as the foundation of the area's first economy. The

¹Minnie Lea Rogers, *Driftwood Heritage: The History of Driftwood, Texas* (Austin: Capital Printing Co., 1970), 3.

²Frances Stovall, et al., *Clear Springs and Limestone ledges: A History of San Marcos and Hays County from the Texas Sesquicentennial* (Austin: Eakin Publications, 1986), 334; Hays County tax rolls, 1895, San Marcos, Texas.

³Rogers, *Driftwood Heritage*, 4.

⁴*Ibid.*, 5.

settlers along Onion Creek supplied the flourishing new capital of Texas, located only eighteen miles to the east, with cypress shingles thus making the cypress trees were worth much more than the land itself. Records show the value of one cypress tree in the mid nineteenth century was equal in value to one acre of land as late as the twentieth century.⁵ The first few settlers purchased their land by contracting to produce cypress shingles for the original title owner. In the 1850s the Butlers, Johnsons, and Speeds all obtained land south of Driftwood by making shingles. These families formed the core of the Bluff Springs community, located less than a mile south of the center of Driftwood. Nannie Dorroh taught at the Bluff Springs School for the 1896-1897 school year.

The macro economy slowly switched to small farms and ranches over the next thirty years. In the 1850s, the Wilhelms settled to the north of the original settlers, in Driftwood proper, and remained there as farmers. Christian Wilhelm, a German immigrant, worked in the state land office at Austin, and the state paid him with land along Onion Creek. William Perry and his grown son, Rufe, both purchased land from the original Freelove Woody grant in the 1850s. One of Rufe's granddaughter's, Minerva Jane, married a man named Hugh Odom. The Odoms, their seven sons, and two daughters became an integral part of the Driftwood community. One of their sons, Albert Odom, married Nannie Dorroh in 1904.

Between 1869 and 1878 three more families, the Rogers, Jacks, and Reaves, migrated into the area. Even though William F. Reaves' family scattered away soon after

⁵Ibid., 8. Rogers also came across a law suit in which the plaintiff sued the defendant for six hundred dollars for cutting down twenty-five cypress trees on his land.

his death in 1886, the family remained important to the community by initiating construction of the first schoolhouse. A circuit preacher by the name of John A. Garrison, Nannie Dorroh's uncle, first began his ministry to the community in this schoolhouse. He and his family had moved to central Texas from Mississippi in 1874. On 26 January 1878 Reverend O. A. Fisher ordained Garrison a deacon of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.⁶ The circuit included the Driftwood area.

The height of the Driftwood economy began with a chain migration from the old South transplanting cotton agriculture to the area in the 1880s. In 1878 Reverend Garrison purchased two hundred acres of unsettled land in the Driftwood area and thereby started the migration of cotton farmers. The economic devastation after the Civil War pushed farmers out of Mississippi, Alabama, South Carolina, and Georgia and the inexpensive land in central Texas pulled them west.⁷ The previously uncultivated land supported farmers with mild prosperity for the next thirty to forty years. James T. Howard, his bride of one week, and her brother made the trip from Mississippi with the Garisons. In 1881, J. T. Howard bought land near the Garisons from W. J. G. Johnson, one of the earliest

⁶Stoval, *Clear Springs*, 336; Rogers, *Driftwood Heritage*, 58. In 1874 the Garisons left Senatobia, Mississippi with two other families and moved to Martindale, Texas in Caldwell County. Mrs. Mary Garrison's paternal aunt, Nancy Martindale, lived in the community with her family. Nancy Martindale was the sister of Nannie Dorroh's grandfather, Thomas Martin. Reverend Garrison's sister, Cordelia Byrd, and her husband John traveled with the Garisons from Mississippi to Texas.

⁷While the majority of settlers to Driftwood came from the deep South, a few families created a more diverse community. Besides the Wilhelms, two other families originally came from Europe. The McKenzie's immigrated from Scotland and purchased the largest farm in Driftwood, 1653 acres. The Foxes immigrated from England but lived in the northeastern United States prior to moving to Texas. Rogers, *Driftwood Heritage*, 14-15, 98-99.

settlers of Driftwood.⁸

Reverend Garrison further encouraged the migration of his wife's family into the area. Mary Martin Garrison was the daughter of Tom and Mary Almyra Martin, Nannie Dorroh's grandparents. On 1 March 1861 Almyra Martin died from complications after the birth of her sixth child. The infant perished less than three weeks after the death of her mother. At the brink of civil war Thomas Martin was left a widower with five children ages three to fourteen. Less than a year after his first wife's death, forty-one-year-old Thomas Martin married a twenty-four-year-old school teacher, Caledonia Zorayda Rogers, to care for his children while he went to war. Between 1863 and 1878 Callie and Thomas Martin had eight more children.⁹ In 1881 Thomas Martin and his family decided to follow his daughter and son-in-law, Mary and John Garrison, to Driftwood. He and a James T. Eckols bought a large tract of land along Onion Creek from an Austin merchant. The merchant had procured the land from William Cannon, partner of Freeloove Woody, as payment for debt.

Mattie Dorroh, David Hillyard Martin, and Lucy Dunevant--the children of Almyra and Thomas Martin--traveled with their own families to Texas in the same wagon train as their father, stepmother, and eight half brothers and sisters.¹⁰ D.L. Dorroh,

⁸Ibid., 58.

⁹Thomas Bond, personal interview, Robstown, Texas, 18 January 1997; Genealogy records, Nola Martin Harding Papers, The Harding Foundation, Raymondville, Texas. Martin and his family initially followed his daughter and son-in-law to Martindale in 1878.

¹⁰Genealogy records, Harding Papers. Only one daughter, Nannie Aycock, remained in Mississippi.

Nannie Dorroh's father, purchased about two hundred acres from his father-in-law, Thomas Martin, and moved into the area with his wife, Mattie. Lucy Dunevant and her family settled in nearby Kyle until the death of her husband, after which Lucy and her two children, Allie and John, moved to Driftwood. David Hillyard Martin permanently settled in Martindale, Texas, but his son and daughter-in-law, Earl and Pluma Martin, made their home in Driftwood in the late 1880s or early 1890s. Thomas Martin's brother-in-law, M. Lafayette (Fayette) Rogers and his wife Olivia also moved to Texas with the Martin wagon train and eventually settled in Driftwood in the 1890s.

Soon after Thomas Martin diverted Onion Creek to power the area's first cotton gin and grist mill and petitioned for a Driftwood post office, other families moved into the community.¹¹ Fenton Boyce Hall and his wife followed their daughter, Ellen Hall Eckols, to the area. One of their sons, Laurel Hall, married Nannie Dorroh's sister, Kate, in 1892. The Crumleys and Whisenants soon moved into the area as well. In 1883 the S. L. Harris family purchased land in Driftwood.¹² Mrs. Harris was a Young before marriage, and her relatives lived in nearby Cedar Valley and Dripping Springs. Nannie Dorroh remained good friends with Mrs. Harris' younger brother, Ben Young of Cedar Valley. With the addition of the families, Nannie's social network was more or less in place. The families who arrived with the cotton migration continued to play a major role

¹¹Rogers, *Driftwood Heritage*, 31-34, 39-44; Stovall, *Clear Springs*, 334-338. Thomas Martin held the office of postmaster from 1886 until 1901, the year of his death. He employed the Garison boys as Star Carriers to bring the mail out from Buda twice a week until 1902 when Driftwood began receiving daily mail.

¹²Rogers, *Driftwood Heritage*, 68

in the community. D. L. Dorroh, J. A. Garison, and J. T. Eckols served as members of the Confederate reunion committee and as trustees for the school and church.

Historian Lawrence Goodwyn related a similar story of a Southern migration from the deep South into the Texas Hill Country and onto Edward's Plateau in the 1870s. The farmers he studied fled the crop lien system when they traveled to Texas and inadvertently settled west of the naturally fertile land in Texas. In addition, the railroads charged more per unit to transport the harvest than the farmers made after a whole year's work. These farmers experienced extreme economic hardship during the 1880s leading to the formation of the Farmers' Alliance in Lampasas County only about sixty miles north-northwest of Hays County. Driftwood, however, sat right on the edge of the thirty inch rainfall line, and the previously uncultivated land, despite the infertile and rocky soil, sustained the farmers quite well for a generation. The Driftwood community never experienced the extreme poverty and hardship endured by some Texas cotton farmers during the depression years of the 1890s.¹³ Therefore, the farmers in Driftwood remained members of the Democratic Party and never showed an interest in joining either the Farmers' Alliance or the Populist Party.¹⁴ Nonetheless, the Driftwood families were far from wealthy. The young men of Driftwood left the community in droves to look for work because Driftwood could not support a second generation of farmers.

¹³Lawrence Goodwyn, *Democratic Promise: The Populist Moment in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), 26-36.

¹⁴In the gubernatorial election of 1892, Hays County voted for the more progressive candidate, James Stephen Hogg, rather than the conservative Democratic candidate, George Clark. Alwyn Barr, *Reconstruction to Reform: Texas Politics, 1876-1906* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1971), 125-142.

The census precincts with which Nannie had the greatest social interaction, those containing the communities of Driftwood, Bluff Springs, Gatlin, Dripping Springs, Cedar Valley, Fitzhugh, and Wimberley, had a similar tenancy rate to the state average. Combined, 41 percent of the farms were freeholds, 41 percent were tenants, and 18 percent of the farms were mortgaged. While several of the members of the Driftwood community owed money on their farms, Nannie never once mentioned visiting the home of a tenant farmer. Statewide, 43 percent of farms were freeholds, 50 percent were tenants, and 6 percent were mortgaged.¹⁵ The number of mortgages, however, might be somewhat misleading because many farmers continually added to their holdings or sold land. For example, half of Reverend J. A. Garrison's land was a freehold and half was purchased on credit from the Austin Land Company.¹⁶ Yet, the 1900 census listed him as a freeholder with no mortgage. If other farmers, like Garrison, categorized themselves as freeholders when they owned some land outright, then the statistics from the census greatly underestimated the extent of debt for farmers in the area.

Nonetheless, at the turn of the century the majority of Driftwood farmers within Nannie's social network operated relatively prosperous farms. In addition to cotton, farmers in the area raised sugarcane, corn, and tended a small amount of stock. As a combination of exhausted soil and the boll weevil led to cotton farming's decline in the

¹⁵Bureau of the Census, *Farms, June 1, 1900. Of White and Colored Farmers, and of Specified Area, Tenure, Stock, By States and Principal Source of Income*; (Washington, D. C., 1900), 45.

¹⁶Hays County Deed Records, Hays County Courthouse, San Marcos, Texas, 8 November 1890, Frank Hamilton and John A. Garrison.

early twentieth century, area land owners increasingly depended on ranching for their cash economy. Nevertheless, compared with the state averages from the census of 1900, Driftwood farmers did relatively well. In 1900 D. L. Dorroh owned 207 acres of land valued at \$4.83 an acre. His land was worth about \$1000 putting his farm in the top 10 percent of cotton farms in the state.¹⁷ In addition, Dorroh owned eight horses and twenty cows valued at \$425.¹⁸ The average farm of those in Nannie's social circle in Driftwood contained 502 acres of land valued at \$1196.41, or about \$2.38 an acre, and the average Driftwood farmer owned twenty cows and over ten horses (see Table 1.1).¹⁹ By comparison, the average white farmer in Texas only owned five horses but had over thirty-eight cows. In addition, the average farm in Texas contained only 357 acres, and less than 17 percent of farms in the state had more than 500 acres. Furthermore, less than 12 percent of farms statewide were valued at over \$1,000.²⁰ While still far from wealthy,

¹⁷Bureau of the Census, *Farms, June 1, 1900. Of White and Colored Farmers*, 44-45. Less than 10 percent of cotton farms were valued at over \$1000 and only 37 percent of cotton farms were valued at over \$500.

¹⁸Office of the Tax Assessor-Collector, Hays County, Tax Rolls 1893-1910, 1900.

¹⁹*Ibid.* Averages for Driftwood farms based on taxes for fourteen of Nannie's neighbors mentioned frequently in the diary. All owners in the sample were from the first generation of cotton farmers who settled in the area. See Table 1.1 for names of families and exact numbers of individual farmers.

²⁰Bureau of the Census, *Farms, June 1, 1900. Of White and Colored Farmers*, 44-45; *Number and Total Value of Specified Domestic Animals, and Values of Poultry and Bees, June 1, 1900, on Farms of White Farmers Classified by Tenure, By States and Territories*, 352-353. The average size farm in Hays County contained 250 acres, with only 22 percent of those acres in cultivation. Bureau of the Census, *Number and Acreage of Farms of Specified Classes of Farm Property, June 1, 1900, with Value of Products of 1899 Not Fed to Live Stock, and Expenditures in 1899 for Labor and Fertilizers, by Counties*, 298-300; The average farm in Hays County owned twenty cows and less than

Table 1.1: Property Taxes Assessed in 1900 for First Generation Members of the Driftwood Community within Nannie Dorroh's Social Network.

Families	Acres	Value per Acre (\$)	Horses	Cattle	Total Value of Estate (\$)	Taxes Assessed
Noah Black	260	3.85	15	40	1610	16.63
Chapple Crumbley	230	5.22	21	22	1545	15.99
David Dorroh	207	4.83	8	20	1425	14.88
James Eckols	270	3.70	10	15	1315	13.87
Jennie Fox	1150	1.52	1	4	1830	18.62
John Garison	440	2.27	18	10	1550	16.26
Annie Harris	150	2.00	7	11	425	3.92
James Howard	522	3.54	35	70	3425	33.32
Abbie Jaques	185	1.08	0	0	200	3.59
Thomas Martin	564	3.55	6	15	2330	21.47
Donald McKenzie	1653	1.27	6	25	2630	25.94
Hugh Odom	100	5.00	2	6	630	5.81
John Whisenant	342	3.95	10	12	1760	17.97
Catherine Wilhelm	957	1.57	10	30	2050	20.64

Source: Office of the Tax Assessor-Collector, Tax Rolls 1893-1910.

Nannie's family enjoyed a comfortable living.

In chapter 2 I analyze the Driftwood community as the children of the first generation reached adulthood. What was daily life like for the young adults? What were their responsibilities to their families and community? How did the young people of Driftwood set up their active social network and entertain themselves in their free time? Almost all aspects of Nannie's life--from her daily responsibilities to attending church--centered on social interaction. Nannie's active social life remained the main focus of her diary from 1894-1904 because she enjoyed growing up in Driftwood and wanted to remember the good times she shared with her friends.

Chapter 3 dissects Nannie's view of herself and those around her within the social and cultural institutions of her rural life. How did race, class, and gender mold her conception of her own identity and the ideology of her youth? Often, how she defined those around her helped her define herself. Unintentionally, Nannie's diary creates a vivid picture of the racism of the turn-of-the-century, Nannie's view of social mobility, and the opportunities of young, rural women. Nannie sought an increase in her standard of living, and she believed that, as a woman, the means to achieve increased social status was through marriage. Because Nannie wanted to marry well, she avoided a hasty or premature marriage at too young of an age.

Chapter 4 analyzes Nannie's experiences while teaching for nine years. Nannie's diary provides clues to the inner turmoil of teachers--what she loved, liked, resented, and

five horses . Bureau of the Census, *Number and Total Value of Specified Domestic Animals on Farms and Ranges, June 1, 1900, by Counties*, 482.

hated about her profession. For research about the actual conditions of the rural one-room school, Nannie's diary is a valuable source because her views on education were candid. Since she was not consciously keeping a record of her teaching, she did not worry about making herself look good in every situation. Rather, she used her diary to vent her frustrations. Education was always secondary to her social life. She began writing her diary before her teaching career and continued writing afterward.

With the exception of out of town trips, Nannie always wrote in her diary at night while her memory of the day remained fresh. Despite this, she filled her entries with rich detail, Nannie consistently wrote every line of her diary in rhymed couplets. Her preference for rhyming created some difficulties in interpretation. Did forcing rhymes influence what activities she included or failed to include in her diary? Did certain comments in her diary reflect only a need to find a word that rhymed with the line above? In most cases, I have assumed that what was written in her diary was what she felt, did, or believed. Nonetheless, every point made in this study is backed by numerous references within her diary. Individual stray remarks did not change the outcome of analysis because any random comments included only for the sake of rhyme would have been eliminated from interpretation. In addition, any time italics appear within any quote from the diary, the italics reflects her emphasis. The vast majority of emphasized words were underlined twice in her diary.

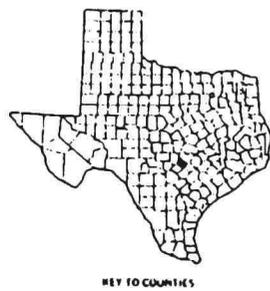
CHAPTER II

FRIENDSHIP AND COURTSHIP

With the large influx of young families in the early 1880s, by the late 1890s Driftwood contained a lively young social network.¹ By the turn of the century well over one hundred Driftwood teenagers and young adults entertained one another. Nearby Dripping Springs offered the only high school courses in northern Hays County so adolescents from Fitzhugh, Gatlin, Cedar Valley and other local communities attended school and church together, made friends, and courted one another, thereby completing Driftwood's social web (see Figure 2.1). Because the families in Driftwood had achieved modest prosperity, the adolescents and unmarried young adults had a large amount of free time for diversion. Work, church, seasonal festivities, entertainments, and a few short-lived clubs provided ample opportunities each year for rural young people to enjoy social interaction.

Nannie and her friends often turned their daily responsibilities into social activities. For the young women of Driftwood, picking cotton was an opportunity for social interaction much more so than an economic necessity. In addition to hiring outside help during harvest season, Driftwood neighbors hired each other's children to work in the fields. In 1897 Albert Odom, Nannie's future husband, even boarded at the Dorroh.

¹Rogers, *Driftwood Heritage*, 14-99.



- A--Driftwood
- B--The Dorroh Farm
- C--Camp Ben McCulloch
- D--Gatlin
- E--Bear Creek (Cedar Valley)
- F--Dripping Springs
- G--Fitzhugh

Figure 2.1: Map of Northern Hays County

Source: State Department of Highways and Public Transportation, *General Highway Map Hays County Texas* (Austin, 1994), 106.

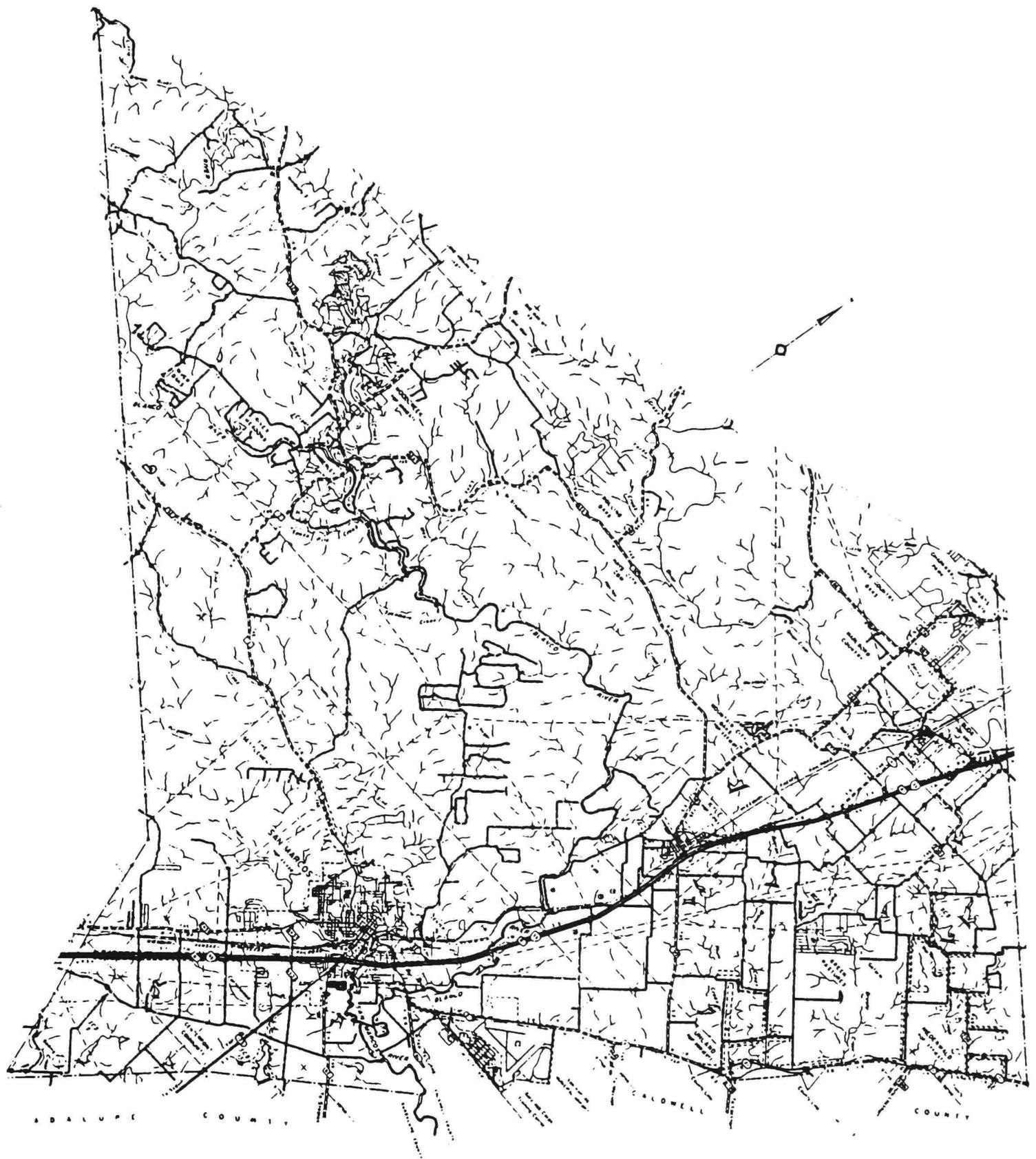


Figure 2.2: Map of Southern Hays County

Source: State Department of Highways and Public Transportation, *General Highway Map Hays County Texas* (Austin, 1994), 106.

house for a month while he worked on their farm.² Because neighbors shared children, friends worked with one another in the fields.³ Nannie described picking cotton with her half-aunt Hattie Martin as a “grand time.” She and Hattie annoyed Hattie’s brother Tom Martin because they “cut up” more than they worked.⁴ After Tom Martin’s marriage in December of 1899, Nannie missed him throwing cotton bolls at the girls and fighting with them in the fields, but she felt that her cousins Ed Garison and John Dunevant did a fine job of assuming his place. The young men badgered the girls by threatening to separate them if they continued their chatter.⁵ Of course, no one ever carried out the threats.

Rather than as a mandatory chore, Nannie and her female friends went to the fields for pocket change. In light of their jocular behavior while picking cotton, the young women seemed to lack both awe for the Driftwood patriarchs and a conscientious work ethic for their families’ financial interests. Nannie reminisced lightheartedly about how she and her friends stole cotton from the finished pile to put in their own bags because the farmers paid per pound picked.⁶ Nannie did not seem to care that nearly four-

²Nannie Dorroh Ododm, diary, Alyne Gray Collection, Southwest Collection, Texas tech University Library, Lubbock, Texas, 18 June 1897.

³Ibid., 10, 26 September, 18 October 1894; 22 January, 3, 17 May 1897; 9 May 1898; 3 January, 21 September 1899; 18 June, 21 August, 17 September, 27 November 1900; 4 January, 26 August 1901.

⁴Ibid., 28 September 1894.

⁵Ibid., 13, 14 September 1900.

⁶Ibid., 28 September 1894.

fifths of the women who picked cotton for their families received no wage at all, no matter how hard they worked. According to economist Ruth Allen who studied women and cotton agriculture in the 1920s, only 22 percent of single women picking cotton for their families in central Texas (whether their fathers were owners, tenants, or day laborers) had the luxury of receiving compensation for their labor. Furthermore, Allen reported that the majority of those who did receive some pay earned less than the going rate.⁷ Nannie mentioned making as little as thirty-five cents to as much as ninety-six cents in one afternoon.⁸ During the first decades of the twentieth century, cotton pickers in Hays County earned about fifty cents for each one hundred pound picked.⁹ Considering the small amount of cotton she picked in a day, it appeared Nannie's father and grandfather paid her the established wage in the area. Allen reported that in 1920 central Texas women picked an average of 194.5 pounds of cotton per day.¹⁰ The only time Nannie mentioned herself picking 200 pounds of cotton was when she went to the fields deliberately to determine how much cotton she could pick that day. Her sister Kate was using their sewing machine so Nannie had nothing else to do.¹¹ Normally Nannie

⁷Ruth Alice Allen, *The Labor of Women in the Production of Cotton* (1933; reprint, New York: Arno Press, 1975), 145. Furthermore, Allen attributed one-thirtieth of the Texas cotton crop of 1920 to the unpaid labor of women. The unpaid women were clearly exploited, since the domestic work they accomplished within the home more than paid for their room and board.

⁸Dorroh diary, 14 September, 1, 11 October 1900.

⁹Stovall, *Clear Springs*, 471.

¹⁰Allen, *Labor of Women*, 151.

¹¹Dorroh diary, 22 September 1898.

picked 100 pounds or less. She rarely worked more than half a day and decided to quit when she grew tired of the monotony.¹²

In addition to picking cotton together, the young folks often made completing their domestic chores more tolerable by pitching in to the task at hand when they visited one another.¹³ The boys who came calling helped Nannie by cutting wood for the stove while she cooked or by drying the dishes after supper.¹⁴ One summer Rogers Odom, Bob Odom, Emma Martin, Joe Petty, Minnie Black, and Herbert Garison came over to the Dorroh's and joined in an impromptu canning party. Nannie characterized the group as "right comical" with the girls sweating in their loose-fitting mother hubbards and bonnets together with the boys in the kitchen. When all were finished, Nannie's mother looked over the results and described the deformed fruit as "the most peculiar peaches she ever saw."¹⁵ Nannie's patient mother might have allowed the flirtations because she viewed the larger goal of marrying off her seven daughters as paramount to a job well done. Nonetheless, canning remained an essential but dreadful task in the Texas heat,

¹²Dorroh diary, 19 September 1894; 11 September 1895; 12, 22 September 1898; 25, 26 September 1900. In 1896 a plantation in Brazos County, Texas registered that the most any labor picked on one particular day was 583 pounds, and the most any female laborer picked was 310 pounds. The average amount picked by all the laborers was 262 pounds, and the mean was 237 pounds. Samuel L. Evans, "Texas Agriculture, 1880-1930," Ph.D. Diss., The University of Texas at Austin, 1960, 44.

¹³Dorroh diary, 2 September 1901.

¹⁴Ibid., 27 May 1895; 19 September 1897; 18 March 1899; 1 July, , 10 August, 9 September, 18 November 1900; 22 June 1901.

¹⁵Ibid., 30 July 1900.

and the female Dorrohs appreciated any help they could get.¹⁶ Laughter made the sweltering heat bearable.

In addition to helping one another, Nannie and her friends often assisted Mrs. Odom, who had two married daughters and seven attractive and unmarried sons. On occasion Nannie washed, starched, and ironed clothes, washed dishes, swept, and canned fruit for her future mother-in-law.¹⁷ Because the assistance was indispensable, Mrs. Odom did not mind her sons and their friends being the main attraction for the girls. On one visit, Nannie, Annie Eckols, and Nannie's sister Mag helped Mrs. Odom quilt while Tyson Odom "fed them on pecans." Will Roberts, "a young man," was also visiting the Odom's that day. Nannie wrote, "of course we enjoy being with young men anywhere," and further said they "sure had some fun that day."¹⁸ On another occasion Nannie went to borrow some molasses from Mrs. Odom and stayed to help Mrs. Odom wash clothes. She gloated that she was the last to wash Bob Odom's clothes before he left for West Texas.¹⁹ The symbiotic relationship between neighbors worked well. With no daughters at home, Mrs. Odom greatly needed the help, and the young women of the community gained the opportunity to flirt with and demonstrate their domestic skills before some of the most eligible bachelors in town.

¹⁶Robert Caro, "The Sad Irons," in *Unknown Texas*, eds. Jonathon Eisen and Harold Straughn (New York: MacMillan Publishing Company, 1988), 251-253.

¹⁷Dorroh diary, 10, 12 August, 21 September 1897; 17, 22 June 1898; 4 September 1899; 20 August 1901.

¹⁸Ibid., 25 November 1897.

¹⁹Ibid., 21 September 1897.

Gender-defined chores afforded other opportunities for flirtation. Nannie felt feminine when she performed female-oriented tasks in front of the young men. Similarly, she liked it when young men helped her with a masculine task--such as cutting wood for the stove--which often fell to the women because no male family member was at hand. The chores made the young people more aware of their differing gender roles; therefore, completing the task together hinted at their sexuality. Nannie wrote, "Miss Bobbie [Bob Odom] and I washed the dishes today, he tied my apron on me. He's a lady's man anyway."²⁰ Later, when Bob Odom sharpened Nannie's sewing scissors, she promised to "remember him every time" she used them.²¹ Jim Black made Nannie the "cutest basket" for collecting berries. The next day Nannie died her sailor collar black and wrote "I like *Black* things you know."²² One of the most obvious examples of courtship, though, was when the boys assisted the girls with the drawn work for their trousseaus. When Jim Black worked a flower on Nannie's worsted quilt, she let it stay.²³ Nannie also let Ben Young work on her quilt.²⁴ Bob Odom and Dave Jacques embroidered on one of Nannie's handkerchiefs.²⁵ After marriage, men almost never dabbled in stereotypical

²⁰Ibid., 1 January 1897.

²¹Ibid., 6 September 1897.

²²Ibid., 12, 13 November 1897.

²³Ibid., 11 April 1897.

²⁴Ibid., 14 March 1895.

²⁵Ibid., 10 December 1898.

women's work again.²⁶ The young people clearly comprehended the symbolism that these linens were destined for Nannie's hope chest.

But even courtship could not induce a flirtatious boy to assist the girls with the hated wash. While young men frequently pitched in with various chores from the dishes to preparing supper, Nannie never once mentioned a young man helping with the wash.²⁷ Albert Odom did no better than promising Nannie he would buy her a washing machine on her wedding day.²⁸ Other boys made empty promises to help. Jim Eckols, Hattie Martin, Nannie, Jim Black, Annie Eckols, and Ida Fox went for a boat ride on Onion Creek and acted out the Spanish-American War. At "Cuba Isle," the "Spaniards" on shore threw mud at the boat thus making a mess of the girls' skirts. Jim Black offered to wash their skirts for them but failed to show the next day. Two weeks later Hattie and Nannie refused to let Jim in the house because, of course, he had conveniently forgotten about the washing.²⁹

The boys could hardly be blamed for failing to call on wash day because, like all of the rural women in the Texas Hill Country, the young women of Driftwood continued

²⁶Jean E. Friedman, *The Enclosed Garden: Women and Community in the Evangelical South, 1830-1900* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1985), 21. Friedman argued women were much more likely to do men's work than vice versa.

²⁷Dorroh diary, 19 September 1897.

²⁸Ibid., 28 December 1899.

²⁹Ibid., 6, 10, 19 June 1898.

to wash clothes just as their grandmothers had.³⁰ Lucy Black's diary mentioned a washing machine agent who did a week's worth of wash as a demonstration, but outside of sewing machines, the families did not indulge in labor saving devices for women. Even while working with a group of friends, washing was never fun. Nannie groaned about washing the skin off her knuckles while rubbing each garment by hand. One of her friends even confided to Nannie that she had cried over several garments before getting them clean.³¹ To make matters worse, Nannie's mother did not always agree with her daughters on what she should accept as a "passable job." Nannie dreaded when her mother's inspections resulted in some of the finished garments going right back in the dirty clothes.³² Nannie and her sisters washed as many as 220 garments at one time. The more the family enjoyed visiting, traveling, or attending entertainments, the more the wash load expanded. One of Nannie's friends suggested remembering how each garment became soiled while washing it to make the job more pleasant, but Nannie thought the advice provided small consolation.³³

Arguably, ironing was even worse than washing. After interviewing rural women in the Texas Hill Country, historian Robert Caro learned that the women referred to their irons as "sad irons."³⁴ Nannie complained her hands "just burnt like fire" when she

³⁰Caro, "Sad Irons," 253-255.

³¹Dorroh diary, 8 September 1898; 9 April 1900.

³²Ibid., 10 April 1902.

³³Ibid., 22, 23 August 1901.

³⁴Caro, "Sad Irons," 255-256.

ironed.³⁵ In another entry, Nannie mentioned how sore her hands were twice during the scanty six lines she wrote in her diary that day.³⁶ Nannie sometimes ironed from six o'clock a.m. straight through noon; the summer heat intensified the fatigue created by the task.³⁷ If she smudged a dress with soot from the fire, she had to begin the washing process all over. Nannie celebrated each white dress she successfully completed without a blemish.³⁸

The older daughters also took turns making breakfast for one week at a time. During her "cook week," Nannie arose out of bed before the rest of the family. She especially disliked arising before dawn during winter when the fire had not yet warmed the house. The worst cook week, however, fell during harvest season when breakfast could be well before dawn, and the cook had to feed a large number of laborers. Nannie wrote, "I think I dread such times as much as a man."³⁹ Even when it was not her turn to cook breakfast during harvest, Nannie still had to arise with her father if she wanted to eat. When breakfast was as early as 3:30, Nannie got up to eat then went back to bed or missed breakfast entirely.⁴⁰ In addition to preparing breakfast, at least one of the

³⁵Dorroh diary, 27 May 1899.

³⁶Ibid., 25 March 1897.

³⁷Ibid., 25 March 1899.

³⁸Ibid., 27 April 1899; 15 May 1901. For an excellent description of the task of ironing without an electric appliance, see Caro, "The Sad Irons," 255-256.

³⁹Dorroh diary, 19 June 1902.

⁴⁰Ibid., 16 November 1898; 2 October 1901.

daughters had to cook dinner, which took all morning, and then a smaller supper.⁴¹

In addition to cooking, Nannie and her sisters had other housekeeping responsibilities. Nannie competed with her sisters and friends in ability to complete household chores, noting praise or criticism for herself and the other young women's domestic skills in her diary.⁴² Because Nannie viewed being a successful wife and mother as the means for success in life, she looked for compliments in her abilities to give her greater confidence and satisfaction. She rarely received any, however, because her parents expected her to satisfactorily complete her chores as a duty to her family without anticipating praise.⁴³ Historian Karen Lystra claimed that women were possessive of domestic work because it was in this sphere that they derived their only power and recognition.⁴⁴ If women could not expect praise in the home, they might never receive praise in their lifetimes. As the eldest unmarried daughter, Nannie usually stayed home to keep house all morning and early afternoon while her mother did her visiting or tended to sick relatives and neighbors. Nannie often fantasized about taking care of her own house after marriage while she worked.⁴⁵ Nannie was lucky; she had six sisters with

⁴¹Ibid., 24 June 1900. Nannie claimed it took her from ten until one to make the chicken soup for dinner.

⁴²Ibid., 19 May, 6 August 1901; 6, 8 April 1902

⁴³Ibid., 16 April 1902.

⁴⁴Karen Lystra, *Searching the Heart: Women, Men, and Romantic Love in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 138-141. Lystra went on to tell the story of a young woman who was jealous of the recognition her husband received in the military while she felt she had no means to distinguish herself.

⁴⁵Dorroh diary, 3 June 1903.

whom to share the real drudge work.⁴⁶ While hard work was often done in the morning, Nannie and her sisters had plenty of time in the afternoon for a lengthy nap or other mischief, even during canning or harvesting season.

With all their chores finished, the young people of Driftwood removed their work clothes, dressed “with best looks,” and assumed the roles of ladies and gentlemen.⁴⁷ Once again, gendered fashion trends provided opportunities for flirtation. The recognition of the differences in men’s and women’s clothing hinted at the sexuality that the young people would almost never have openly discussed.⁴⁸ Nannie wrote of Ben Young, “He beats all I ever knew to notice dresses, he asked if mutton leg sleeves had gone out of style. Picked up a paper and said he thought so and *balloon* sleeves had come in.”⁴⁹ Earlier he had teased Nannie that “the ladies dress so much like men--you can’t tell one from the other.”⁵⁰ Two years later, Jim Black amused Nannie when he kept reading what “he thought was a school journal--but was a *fashion design*.” Clearly Jim was flirting with Hattie and Nannie, and he succeeded too. Nannie wrote in that same diary entry that she and Hattie had “the Jim disease bad.”⁵¹ On another occasion, Nannie wrote that Bob

⁴⁶Allen, *Labor of Women*, 83. Allen claimed even two grown women sharing domestic chores was rare.

⁴⁷Dorroh diary, 14 November 1900.

⁴⁸Nannie never even mentioned the pregnancies of her sister and closest friends until after the baby was born.

⁴⁹*Ibid.*, 19 March 1895.

⁵⁰*Ibid.*, 28 February 1895.

⁵¹*Ibid.*, 21 November 1897.

acted just like a girl because he said “he despises *standing collars* and *red cravats*.” Of course, Nannie quickly agreed. Flirtatiously, Bob said he liked plain turned down collars just like the one Nannie wore.⁵² Much like the gender-oriented chores, the discussions of women’s clothing made Nannie feel feminine.

Sunday afforded Nannie the greatest opportunity to show off a newly acquired dress and investigate her neighbors’ new clothing.⁵³ With a new hat, dress, *and* russet shoes, Nannie pranced to Sunday school hardly able to contain her pride.⁵⁴ She often expressed disappointment to her diary if the young men failed to notice her new clothes.⁵⁵ Even when she admitted everyone said a new dress was pretty, Nannie still complained, “Pshaw! I’d rather those compliments had been on me.”⁵⁶ One Sunday she almost stayed home from preaching because she did not know what to wear. She decided to go with the staple white waist and skirt and was relieved to see that almost every other young woman wore the same.⁵⁷ A white waist was more versatile and less expensive than a whole new dress, but it was also more casual and therefore questionable attire for church. Nannie routinely wrote in her diary what she wore to church, especially when the outfit included a new hat or some other accessory. She looked forward to Sundays because she spent the

⁵²Ibid., 23 May 1897.

⁵³Ibid., 19 June 1897.

⁵⁴Ibid., 28 October 1900.

⁵⁵Ibid., 5 May 1901.

⁵⁶Ibid., 30 October 1898.

⁵⁷Ibid., 25 October 1903.

day all dressed up surrounded by a large number of her family, friends, and acquaintances.

Sunday almost always followed an established routine. First of all, the weekly day of rest meant sleeping in until eight o'clock in the morning. It was "the Blessed Sabbath, [I] didn't have to rise so early."⁵⁸ After breakfast, the family relaxed and studied their Sunday school lessons. The Driftwood community attended Sunday school at ten o'clock and then all remained to hear the first sermon of the day. Many of those who attended preaching in Driftwood then met at the Dorroh's for dinner because the Dorroh home was nearest to the church.⁵⁹ Female family members took turns staying home to cook for the large crowd of company that came every Sunday.⁶⁰ One week Nannie claimed almost everyone she knew was at their house by 2:00 in the afternoon.⁶¹ Nannie and the young visitors could not play games on Sundays, but they did sing religious hymns, take walks together, and gossip. At 3:30 all went to prayer meeting and then separated to their individual homes for supper. After supper the young people coupled off and went to night preaching. In addition, Nannie and her friends peppered their spiritual growth with sermons on Saturday nights.

The Driftwood community founded the Methodist church in 1884 with Nannie's

⁵⁸Ibid., 31 August 1902.

⁵⁹Ted Ownby, *Subduing Satan: Religion, Recreation, and Manhood in the Rural South* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 110.

⁶⁰Dorroh diary, 4 April, 16, 23 May, 19 September, 7 November 1897.

⁶¹Ibid., 28 November 1897.

father, D. L. Dorroh, Nannie's uncle, John A. Garison, and J.T. Eckols, Sr. elected as the first trustees. D.L. Dorroh sold two acres of uncultivated land from his farm for the church.⁶² While Nannie was a member of the Driftwood church, she often attended Baptist, Presbyterian, and other Protestant evangelical services.⁶³ Many of the rural circuit preachers only came to a community once a month, so rural evangelicals commonly went to services of other denominations in order to hear a sermon every week.⁶⁴ Circuit preaching was the most obvious influence to explain why members of the community traveled around northern Hays County so much on Sundays, but more importantly, attending other churches was a means of visiting as well as a means of worshiping. While visiting in Austin, Nannie and her aunt still attended services of three different denominations on one Sunday despite the fact that churches in urban towns did not rely on circuits.⁶⁵

Driftwood also organized a Sunday school. Although Nannie dutifully studied her "awful" Sunday school review, she looked forward to going as a social event.⁶⁶ In fact, studying appeared to have had some social motives. Since Driftwood divided Sunday school classes by age groupings, Nannie did not want to appear ignorant or lazy in front

⁶²Rogers, *Driftwood Heritage*, 79. J. T. Eckols was the partner of Nannie's grandfather when he purchased his first farm in Driftwood. Driftwood also organized a Baptist Church in 1899. Dorroh diary, 25 February 1899.

⁶³Dorroh diary, 31 October 1897.

⁶⁴Ownby, *Subduing Satan*, 126-128.

⁶⁵Dorroh diary, 7 July 1901.

⁶⁶*Ibid.*, 27 September 1902.

of her friends and beaux.⁶⁷ She enjoyed a good turnout at Sunday school especially of young men. Even though only a few showed up for their Sunday school class one week, Nannie still described the class as interesting since she was the only girl.⁶⁸ When Nannie taught and boarded other communities, she expressed her desire to be with her crowd in Driftwood on Sunday where there were always “so many young men at Sunday School.”⁶⁹

Because Sunday school classes were organized by age group, Nannie had conflicted views about teaching a class. If she was asked to lead a class, she would be separated from her friends. But, when she had not studied her lesson well, listening to other classes recite their lessons provided an escape from her own embarrassment. “Every time I fail to know my Sunday school lesson, they give me a class to hear, now isn’t that a blessing.”⁷⁰ Nannie liked Sunday school topics dealing with proper moral behavior rather than spirituality or sectarian minutia. Intemperance was always an “excellent theme.”⁷¹ While she believed debates could make class more interesting, when a debate turned into an argument about scripture Nannie criticized her friends for being worse than Campbellites.⁷² One Sunday she complained of the argument they had with

⁶⁷Walter N. Vernon et al., *The Methodist Excitement in Texas: A History* (Dallas: The Texas United Methodist Historical Society, 1984), 177-178.

⁶⁸Dorroh diary, 8 September 1901.

⁶⁹Ibid., 2 March 1902.

⁷⁰Ibid., 23 December 1898.

⁷¹Ibid., 12 November 1899.

⁷²Ibid., 31 March 1901. William G. McLoughlin, *Revivals, Awakening, and Reform: An Essay on Religion and Social Change in America, 1607-1977* (Chicago: The

their Sunday school review.⁷³ She disliked the reviews because they always discussed scripture rather than appropriate moral behavior.

Nannie also objected to having additional responsibilities at church. When Nannie was elected secretary of the Sunday school in Driftwood, she wrote, "I don't like that at all."⁷⁴ Although she never mentioned her duties, at age eighteen she did not want her social activities unnecessarily burdened. Others in the community seemed to agree with her. The congregation often bestowed offices on the people whose absence rendered them unable to decline the honor. When the members of the Driftwood church elected Nannie organist, she deeply regretted not going to church that day.⁷⁵ The organ was old and difficult to play. More than once Nannie grumbled that she would just as soon wash clothes as play the old machine.⁷⁶ Knowing how difficult washing was, playing the church organ must have been a legitimate complaint. Nannie wrote that the "boys must pump it [the organ] before long unless we poor creatures get considerably stronger."⁷⁷ Jim Black promised to turn the pedals for her once, but, as usual, he failed to show.⁷⁸

University of Chicago Press, 1978), 111. The followers of Alexander Campbell broke off from the Presbyterian denomination during the Second Great Awakening. The term is "often taken to be offensive." *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, 10th ed., s. v. "Campbellite."

⁷³Dorroh diary, 27 June 1897.

⁷⁴Ibid., 6 January 1895.

⁷⁵Ibid., 30 May 1897.

⁷⁶Ibid., 17 February 1901.

⁷⁷Ibid., 25 May 1902.

⁷⁸Ibid., 15 May 1898.

Nannie helped clean the organ twice, “an awful job,” but acknowledged that the organ was “greatly improved” after each maintenance, for a short while at least.⁷⁹ Extra responsibilities could put a damper on Sunday socializing and relaxation.

Occasionally a “jolly crowd” of young people abandoned the Driftwood church and adult supervision to travel to a nearby community for preaching and a picnic.⁸⁰ Crowds of young people from Driftwood and all over northern Hays County traveled to Bear Creek, Thomas Springs, Riverside, and Walnut Springs to mix and mingle for the day.⁸¹ One week, the community even moved Sunday school ahead one hour so eleven “young folks” could go to preaching in Bluff Springs.⁸² Nannie always had a great time on these trips. The young people teased one another mercilessly and had abundant opportunities for flirtation. On the way home from preaching and a picnic at Riverside one Sunday, the girls persuaded Edgar Howard and Nannie’s cousin to grab some peaches from an orchard they passed by. While the boys jumped out of the wagon to obtain the stolen peaches, the girls thought it would be funny to take off without them. Nannie was so hungry she almost wished she had not pulled the trick, but she thought it terribly amusing to see the boys running after the wagon. The boys took their revenge by tossing them old, green, half-rotten peaches which the girls immediately threw back. As things

⁷⁹Ibid., 23 December 1899; 31 May, 16 June 1902.

⁸⁰Ibid., 19 May 1895.

⁸¹Ibid., 26 June, 10 July 1898; 8 July 1900; 23 March 1902

⁸²Ibid., 12 September 1897

calmed down the girls tried to take a nap, but the boys refused to let them sleep.⁸³

Evangelical religions required church members to keep the Sabbath solemn and quiet.⁸⁴

Having a fight with stolen peaches would have been considered inappropriate behavior for the Sabbath Day, but no adults were present to censure their behavior. Therefore, day trips allowed the young people to escape the eyes of disapproving adults and enjoy themselves. Some of Nannie's longest and most detailed diary entries described these "perfect" Sundays.

Because Nannie's attitude toward religion was more social than spiritual, the sermon was rarely the most important event of the day. Just like her preferred Sunday school topics, Nannie's favorite sermon preached morality rather than spirituality. She noted an "excellent sermon" that "gave dancing and whiskey fits," and she approved when Brother Carpenter "hit [the] tobacco boys hard."⁸⁵ In fact, the only time Nannie expressed spiritual awakening during a sermon was when she listened to a woman preacher for the first and only time. She professed, "[I] hardly think anyone could listen to her and not shed tears...[she is] almost redeeming Austin."⁸⁶ But despite the occasional "excellent talk," more often Nannie listened to a "long and loud" sermon that she

⁸³Ibid., 21, 28 July 1895.

⁸⁴Ownby, *Subduing Satan*, 106-110.

⁸⁵Dorroh diary, 19 February 1899; 25 May 1902.

⁸⁶Ibid., 28 November 1897; Vernon, *Methodist Excitement*, 231-232. The Methodists refused to grant women partial clergy rights until 1939 and did not grant them full equality until 1956.

portrayed as a “trial of fasting.”⁸⁷ Her criticism of a sermon could descend from being “entirely too plain” to “have heard finer discourse” and “such a sermon from Bro. Calhoun.”⁸⁸ At a Pleasant Hill Holiness Meeting Nannie commented that “[we] soon got all we needed.”⁸⁹ Instead, Nannie wanted to hear an interesting sermon condemning sinners with plenty of anecdotal evidence. By the time she listened to her third sermon of the day Nannie would nod off a few times along with everyone else.⁹⁰ She wrote, “three times a day gets next to a fellow.”⁹¹ Nannie also mentioned misbehaving during sermons. When she witnessed a little boy loose his struggle to stay awake on a backless bench, she admitted she was “ashamed to say I never did cut up so ridiculously and [when] that poor little boy hit the floor that way.” She also described sitting in one pew with seven of her female friends overcome with the giggles during prayers.⁹² No wonder Nannie disliked playing the organ during church services--she would miss the fun.

Nonetheless, the best part of Sunday remained pairing off with the boys to go to prayer meeting and night preaching.⁹³ When Albert Odom brought Nannie a bucket of

⁸⁷Dorroh diary, 3, 16 September, 12 November 1899; 9, 10 February 1900; 13 September 1903.

⁸⁸Ibid., 17 March, 9 November 1901.

⁸⁹Ibid., 13 September 1903.

⁹⁰Ibid., 22 June, 17 August 1902.

⁹¹Ibid., 7 April 1901.

⁹²Ibid., 26 February 1899; 5 May 1902.

⁹³Ibid., 3 March, 26 May 1895; 9 May, 12 September, 3 October 1897; 24 April 1898; 25, 26 February 1899; Ownby, *Subduing Satan*, 139-140.

peaches to ask her to accompany him to preaching one Saturday night, Nannie wrote “certainly I’ll accept his company...when he’s that thoughtful and kind.”⁹⁴ On another occasion Oscar Allen and Dibb Jones arrived to see if they could take Minnie Black and Nannie to preaching that night. Albert and Rogers Odom had already engaged the girls’ company but had not yet come. When they did arrive, the girls suggested each taking two beaux. Since the boys refused, they carried out the previous engagements. Nannie sighed, “too many beaux--another time will sit home for want of boys.”⁹⁵ It was commonplace for a single boy to take more than one date, but apparently it did not work the other way around. Sometimes the boys’ irresponsibility embarrassed the girls. Nannie believed her reputation depended on the respect shown her by the young men. She complained when Rogers Odom escorted her and Lucy to church but did not take them home because he said his feet hurt. “We’re not used to that.”⁹⁶ Nannie lost her fellow on another occasion, but she excused him writing “a boy’s first duty is to his mother.” Nonetheless, Jim Eckols thought it quite funny that Nannie “got left.” Nannie retorted, “I’d allow him the same privilege I guess.”⁹⁷ Nonetheless, it was embarrassing to have to search for another way home.

Sometimes the young people enjoyed traveling to church in small groups rather

⁹⁴Dorroh diary, 14 September 1899.

⁹⁵Ibid., 3 February 1901.

⁹⁶Ibid., 5 November 1898.

⁹⁷Ibid., 14 September 1902.

than pairing off, but the boys and girls still enjoyed teasing one another.⁹⁸ Nannie expressed her amusement when the preacher reprimanded the boys. Nannie thought “‘twas fine” when Brother Graham “gave the boys fits... about keeping bad company.”⁹⁹ Another lecture stressed that a decent girl would not let a boy take her arm. Nannie wrote that the boys did not appreciate the advise the preacher gave to the girls.¹⁰⁰ Later that evening the girls might have flirtatiously rebuked their escorts for any physical contact. While a group of young people walked to church together, Nannie’s friends teased her because they said her sash looked like her escort, Mr. Trautwein, had his arm around her waist.¹⁰¹ Nannie left a hint that she did allow some physical contact. After a Sunday trip to Bluff Springs, Nannie went home with Millie Howard. She later wrote in her diary, “I wonder if Lem [Howard] always takes the left hand.”¹⁰²

Sometimes Nannie and her female friends did not depend on the boys at all to escort them to preaching. One time Nannie and four other girls rigged a buggy by themselves and went to Bear Creek for preaching without one boy. “Pshaw tho’ we’re independent enough to go alone.”¹⁰³ When Lucy and Nannie came home from church

⁹⁸Ibid., 17 March 1895. 17 September 1899.

⁹⁹Ibid., 15 October 1899.

¹⁰⁰Ibid., 9 May 1897.

¹⁰¹Ibid., 23 April 1899.

¹⁰²Ibid., 28 April 1895.

¹⁰³Ibid., 24 September 1899.

together, Nannie wrote it was “better than being with a fellow.”¹⁰⁴ If Nannie wanted to go somewhere, she rarely stayed home just because she wanted a male escort.

Once a year, Driftwood hosted a religious revival which functioned somewhat as an extended Sunday: lots of visiting, flirting, eating, and of course preaching. The community constructed a large arbor and hauled out the benches and organ of the church since the small building could not hold all of the participants. Out of town visitors flooded the area with tents. Driftwood had no big pot luck buffet; instead, the girls packed a lunch for themselves and perhaps a young man if they were asked. The boys paid the girls for lunch by bringing a watermelon or bouquet for the girl. Like Sunday evening services, the revivals provided further opportunities for courtship to take place. The camp meetings offered a church service at least three times a day for about seven to ten days. Nobody seemed expected to attend every service, though, and housework had to continue throughout the excitement. Nannie commented during one revival, “The preacher said to come to church, not stay with the *stuff*. But if he’d seen the clothes I’ve ironed, he’d think I’ve done enough.”¹⁰⁵ In fact, revivals could make life difficult for women. While the summer meetings deliberately coincided with the break in male-oriented agricultural work, the revivals inadvertently fell during the height of women’s work: canning season. Nannie rushed home to cut fruit in between services.

The camp meeting of 1901 was one of the most successful revivals Driftwood ever had. Preachers measured the success of a revival by how many people joined the

¹⁰⁴Ibid., 26 June 1898.

¹⁰⁵Ibid., 15 July 1897.

church.¹⁰⁶ Nannie described the last night of the 1901 meeting as “glorious,” closing between midnight and one with “such shouting” and about thirty conversions. Nannie claimed that “old people say they never saw the like.”¹⁰⁷ The 1901 meeting was also special to Nannie because the Dorroh family camped out for the first time. Camping allowed them more social interaction and greater participation in the meeting. The family took turns sleeping in the tent and keeping house. While camping, Nannie almost always went to services three times a day. When she stayed home to take care of the house, she would only go to services once a day, if at all.

Nannie escaped the responsibilities of housekeeping and canning by joining her friends on day trips to the revivals of nearby communities, just as the young people of Driftwood occasionally attended other churches on Sundays. In 1902 prior to the opening of the Driftwood meeting, four buggies full of Driftwood couples attended the revival in Gatlin. Ivison Howard and Nannie led the way for the caravan.¹⁰⁸ Sometimes the young people camped out for the weekend. In 1900 Aunt Lucy Dunevant, Mag Dorroh, Albert Odom, Lillie and Emma Martin, Dave Jacques, and Nannie journeyed down Onion Creek to the Live Oak meeting. Aunt Lucy played the role of chaperone for the three-day weekend. After they set up camp, Nannie counted another twenty-five tents within sight of theirs. The next day she attended preaching before breakfast, at noon, and after supper,

¹⁰⁶Vernon, *Methodist Excitement*, 175; Ownby, *Subduing Satan*, 149.

¹⁰⁷Dorroh diary, 12-19 August 1901. At age eighteen, Nannie herself formally joined the Driftwood Methodist Church during the 1895 revival.

¹⁰⁸*Ibid.*, 17 July 1902.

but she and her friends felt too lazy to go to the mid-morning services. All afternoon the young people entertained callers at their campsite. Like Sundays, the revivals were highly social occasions. Nannie said “they were most disgraced” because they talked all through the first day of services. The next day, however, she thought everyone seemed more interested in the sermon.¹⁰⁹

Nannie wrote a detailed description of her participation in the 1897 revival season. She attended her first meeting for the year on July eleventh in nearby Bluff Springs. In all Nannie would go to services six times in Bluff Springs: Sunday morning, Tuesday morning and evening, Wednesday evening, and Friday morning and evening. Thursday, Nannie’s mother and aunt Mary Garrison went to preaching and left their oldest daughters at home to take care of the houses.¹¹⁰ The revival opened in Fitzhugh on Saturday. Nannie, Ida Harris, Mrs. Annie Harris, her cousin Mary Garrison, and her aunt Mary Garrison arrived in Fitzhugh at about noon. They attended services that afternoon and later that night. Nannie camped out in her cousin Henry Dorroh’s carpeted tent, and the next day she attended preaching before and after dinner. In the afternoon she went for a walk with a couple of male acquaintances. That night she stayed once again in Henry Dorroh’s tent before heading back home on Monday.¹¹¹ While Nannie did not go to another revival for twelve days, at regular Sunday service she blamed all the empty pews on the fact that nearly everybody else had gone to some camp meeting. She wrote, “[It]

¹⁰⁹Ibid., 25, 27 August 1900.

¹¹⁰Ibid., 11-16 July 1897.

¹¹¹Ibid., 17-19 July 1897.

will be that way for a few months.”¹¹² On 31 July Nannie went to the Wimberly revival for a couple of days with Hattie and Lillie Martin. They stayed in the Estes girls’ tent. Sallie Estes was Nannie’s former teacher at the Liberty Hill School and her current pen pal. The old friends caught up on gossip until about two in the morning.¹¹³

When she returned home, Nannie wrote that everyone was busy planning for the Driftwood meeting which opened on Friday, 6 August. Nannie noted that a large crowd of visitors flocked in to attend the revival including her friend, Texanna Waldrip, who traveled down to Driftwood from San Marcos. Hattie Martin, Mary Garison, Lucy Black, and Nannie had befriended Texanna at the teacher’s institute in San Marcos the previous year, and Texanna planned to take turns staying with each of her four Driftwood friends.¹¹⁴ Six different beaux escorted Nannie to or from services during the revival. Bob Odom took Nannie to preaching on Saturday, and Tandy Adams escorted her Sunday night. After Nannie spent the whole day at church on Monday, Lem Howard brought her home at nearly twelve that night. On Tuesday, Nannie bragged “we both had *Black on our arms*” meaning that Garrett and Jim Black escorted her and Texanna home from the arbor. Wednesday morning Nannie stayed home to wash clothes, but Albert brought her home from evening services. Since rain washed out the meeting Thursday, Nannie and her friends went over to her grandfathers and still had a good time. They returned to the

¹¹²Ibid., 25 July 1897.

¹¹³Ibid., 31 July 1897.

¹¹⁴Ibid., 20 June 1897. Dorroh diary missing for 1896, but Nannie referred back to meeting Texanna on the one year anniversary of their friendship.

arbor Saturday, and Sparks McClintock took Nannie to the final services Sunday night.¹¹⁵

The annual Confederate reunion was a spinoff of Driftwood's religious revival.¹¹⁶ Whites from large and small communities all across the South annually celebrated their Confederate heritage with similar reunions.¹¹⁷ Driftwood boasted eleven Confederate veterans including Nannie's grandfather and father. By 1898 the Driftwood reunion attracted over 2,000 people, and the local paper stated that the tents stretched for over a mile up and down Onion Creek.¹¹⁸ In 1902 Nannie and her friends formed the Daughters and Sons of the old Confederates.¹¹⁹ That same year the reunion committee, D.L. Dorroh, J.A. Garison, and J.T. Eckols, purchased land along Onion Creek for a permanent campground which they named after Confederate war hero, Ben McCulloch.¹²⁰ the

¹¹⁵Ibid., 6-15 August 1897.

¹¹⁶Rogers, *Driftwood Heritage*, 106. According to Rogers, Driftwood hosted its first reunion in 1896, the missing year of Nannie's diary. Rogers claimed that several of the veterans living in northern Hays County decided to plan a reunion at the 1896 revival meeting. At the 1896 meeting, the veterans organized a Confederate Veteran's Camp and planned the 1897 reunion.

¹¹⁷Gaines M. Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy: Defeat, the Lost Cause, and the Emergence of the New South 1865-1913* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 106-107. Between 1896 and 1904, 75 percent of counties in the eleven former Confederate states held annual reunions. The United Confederate Veterans claimed to have 850 local camps.

¹¹⁸Dorroh diary. 13 August 1898. Foster reported that over 140,000 visitors including 12,000 Confederate veterans attended a reunion in Dallas in 1902. Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy*, 135.

¹¹⁹Dorroh diary., 7, 8, 9 August 1902.

¹²⁰Ibid., 4 July 1902; Rogers, *Driftwood Heritage*, 107. Ben McCulloch was a Confederate general who died in the Battle of Pea Ridge in 1862. Before the Civil War, McCulloch fought Native Americans on the Texas frontier under Hays County namesake,

committee had “considerable trouble” choosing a site to everyone’s satisfaction, but Nannie expressed her approval that the new location was “a nice drive” from their home instead of right next door.

The reunions had a carnival like atmosphere with several events taking place at any one time. Nannie played the organ at the first reunion, but in later years a band from Kyle or Buda played traditional favorites like “Dixie,” “Bonnie Blue Flag,” and “The Girl I Left Behind Me.”¹²¹ Each year the Driftwood baseball team played teams from other local communities, but Nannie felt the speeches glorifying the Old South and the Lost Cause “beat it all.”¹²² Democratic political candidates, who often stayed with the Dorrohs, also took full advantage of the large audiences to give their campaign speeches.¹²³ In the true spirit of romanticism which surrounded these reunions, one newspaper article proudly asserted that there was not a drunk man nor a disturbance on the grounds at the 1903 reunion, “all was peace, love, and happiness.”¹²⁴

Christmas, more traditionally associated with “peace, love, and happiness,” was a reunion in its own right. Christmas week meant the return of the prodigals, the one time

Colonel Jack Hays.

¹²¹Dorroh diary, August 1901. Newspaper article inserted in the diary.

¹²²Ibid., 8 August 1901.

¹²³Ibid., 12 August 1898; Foster, *Ghosts of the Mississippi*, 142. Officially, most reunions discouraged political speeches, but most reunions still could not prevent the Democrats from taking charge. Nannie would have agreed that the politicians were pests. 12 August 1898.

¹²⁴Dorroh diary, August 1903. Newspaper article inserted in the dairy.

of the year when almost everyone from Driftwood was together. Teachers boarding in other communities and the young men working in Indian Territory, Mexico, or Beaumont all came home.¹²⁵ As was popular in rural Texas communities, each year the families gathered together on Christmas Eve at the church. Nannie and her friends enjoyed decorating the community tree and preparing songs and recitations for the children to perform before they opened presents.¹²⁶ A couple of the young men, like Jim Black and Lem Howard, handed out the presents while Mary Garison and Nannie called out the names.¹²⁷ Everyone received at least one gift. If someone had been inadvertently left out, the young people put together some type of food gift for that person before the celebration began. While Nannie occasionally received manufactured presents such as a glove box and an album, food and homemade gifts remained the most common.¹²⁸ Nannie made centerpieces, handkerchiefs, throws, sofa pillows, photo cases, and even a letter opener made out of a wishbone to give to her friends, and she never once mentioned Santa Claus visiting the children.¹²⁹ Driftwood celebrated Christmas more like a traditional, agricultural holiday than the Victorian commercialized holiday.¹³⁰ After she began

¹²⁵Ibid., 15, 19 December 1897.

¹²⁶Ibid., 15, 24 December 1895; 24 December 1901.

¹²⁷Ibid., 24 December 1895.

¹²⁸Ibid., 24 December 1898; 26 January 1901.

¹²⁹Ibid., 20 November, 18 December 1902.

¹³⁰Stephen Nissenbaum, *The Battle for Christmas* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996), 133-134, 139.

teaching, Nannie could afford to give some store bought gifts like dolls and a little piano to her younger brothers and sisters.¹³¹

As in rural communities all over Texas, each year the boys organized parties for every night between Christmas and New Year's Day.¹³² In 1897, Nannie and the young adults went to Annie Wilhelm's for Christmas dinner and then the first party. Since the 26th was Sunday, they had to rest from the festivities. Nannie missed the party at Mrs. Harris' on the 27th but rejoined her friends on the 28th at Herbert Garisons' party. Texanna Waldrip and her sister Della again came up from San Marcos.¹³³ On the 29th Nannie and her "crowd" had dinner at the Garisons and then six couples walked over to the party at Mr. Gunns'. The next day the party moved on to Gatlin at the Blacks' house. The holidays ended with a New Year's Eve party at the Martins'. Ben Young came to the party from Cedar Valley and escorted Nannie home. Because Texans liked to make as much noise as possible throughout the Christmas holidays, the boys shot off firecrackers every day and night.¹³⁴ They even tied firecrackers to some poor old donkey's tail to watch him run. The parties demonstrated the secular side of Christmas. Nannie never once made a religious reference to Christmas. In the medieval tradition, Christmas was a time to let loose and forego normal inhibitions. While Nannie herself never engaged in

¹³¹Dorroh diary, 24 December 1897.

¹³²Ibid., 22 December 1895.

¹³³Nannie missed Mrs. Harris' party because her mother wanted her to rest. Nannie had only come home from teaching school on the 22nd.

¹³⁴Elizabeth Silverthorne, *Christmas in Texas* (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 1990), 33-35.

the “sinful” activity of dancing, she mentioned that “some” did during Christmas week.¹³⁵ Nonetheless, Nannie and six of her female friends smoked cigarettes on one New Year’s Eve.¹³⁶ For the Driftwood community, Christmas was not so much a time to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, but a celebration of the end of the agricultural season and a rest from work.¹³⁷

In addition to the seasonal activities, the young people of Driftwood took turns hosting musical entertainments where they sang and played games such as dominoes, Parcheesi, Flinch, or croquet.¹³⁸ Nannie was competitive with the boys. After playing dominoes with Lem Howard, she triumphantly recorded that “he was badly beaten.”¹³⁹ Nannie not only boasted that she beat Jim Black her first time to play Parcheesi, but she accused him of cheating also.¹⁴⁰ When Bob Odom beat Nannie playing dominoes, he gave her a cute bouquet to make up for it.¹⁴¹ Her competitive spirit continued when the singing started. One of Nannie’s favorite songs to perform for familiar male guests was “The Boys Won’t Do To Trust.” The lighthearted song warns of the sweet words boys

¹³⁵Dorroh diary, 27 December 1899; 25 December 1900.

¹³⁶Ibid., 31 December 1897.

¹³⁷Nissenbaum, *Battle for Christmas*, 6.

¹³⁸Dorroh dairy, 12 March, 27 April 1897.

¹³⁹Ibid., 16 January 1895.

¹⁴⁰Ibid., 7 January 1898; 27 January 1899.

¹⁴¹Ibid., 26 June 1897.

will say, but “To pin them down to business: The boys won’t do to trust.”¹⁴² In 1901 *The Spinster Book* echoed similar sentiments by complaining that every boy acted as though he courted every girl. The author, Myrtle Reed, claimed that “men serenade girls on summer nights because they love to hear themselves sing.”¹⁴³ During one entertainment at Nannie’s house, the boys gave the girls pecans and candy as pay for their singing performance.¹⁴⁴ Jim Black flirted with Nannie by teaching her a song, “Write Me a Letter from Home,” that he claimed he wrote for her.¹⁴⁵ In addition to occasions for flirtation, the musical entertainments often served the function of honoring a visitor to the community or to say farewell any time one of the young people left for a trip or for work outside the community.¹⁴⁶ In 1903 Nannie had three entertainments thrown in her honor when she visited Driftwood after her family moved away to Williamson County; one at her Aunt Lucy Dunevant’s on 24 March, one at Mrs. Harris’ on the 26th, and one on the 28th thrown by the Radars who owned Nannie’s former house.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴²Ray B. Browne, ed., *The Alabama Folk Lyric: A Study in Origins and Media of Dissemination* (Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1979), 198. The song most likely traveled to Driftwood with the southern migration to the area.

¹⁴³Myrtle Reed, *The Spinster Book* (1901; reprint, New York: The Knickerbocker Press, 1908), 72-73. The author contrasted the end of the nineteenth century with earlier decades when a girl could go ahead and send out wedding invitations as soon as a boy paid her the slightest attention.

¹⁴⁴Dorroh diary, 12 January 1895. The girls sang a religious hymn, “Happy on the Way.”

¹⁴⁵*Ibid.*, 23 September 1898.

¹⁴⁶*Ibid.*, 30 June 1900.

¹⁴⁷*Ibid.*, 24, 26, 28 March 1903.

In the summertime young people enjoyed ice cream socials and lemonade parties. During an ice cream social at Nannie's grandfather's house, the young people received candy within slips of paper that seemed to function as modern conversation hearts. Lem Howard handed Nannie a slip of paper which read, "Love intoxicates me." Bob Odom gave Nannie two slips of paper which read, "Your lips they are of brightest hue, I'd like to taste their ambrosial dew" and "A question, I might pop to you, But, Lord! I know not what to do."¹⁴⁸ Nannie inserted the slips of paper in her diary so she would never forget the emphatic flirting at the party.

Nannie also attended theme parties including two separate "apron parties" and one "tacky party."¹⁴⁹ For the apron parties, the girls each made an apron in advance for one of the young men to hem at the party. Couples were randomly paired the night of the event, and the couple judged to have the best hemmed apron won a cake. Nannie and her partner Oscar Allen won the cake at the first party, and they passed their prize around for all to share. After the party Nannie commented, "It was so amusing to watch them sew, just bent double and going as fast as they could go."¹⁵⁰ The night before, Nannie smugly advised the boys to practice sewing "so you can win the prize." Bob Odom watched Nannie make her apron and teased her by claiming "he won't hem an apron made out of

¹⁴⁸Ibid., 12 July 1897.

¹⁴⁹While the Driftwood community hosted only two apron parties and one tacky party, the party themes were more widespread. While Nannie herself never went to any of the other parties outside her neighborhood, she mentioned friends and acquaintances who attended apron and tacky parties in nearby communities.

¹⁵⁰Ibid., 10 April 1897.

an old dress” and asserted none of the other boys would either. Nannie countered that “he must do his best” regardless.¹⁵¹ Nannie’s friend Jim Black won the second contest.¹⁵² The parties functioned as extensions of the flirtation which regularly surrounded gender defined tasks such as the boys’ stitching some of the girls’ drawn work. In addition, the apron parties appeared to serve as an innocent compromise between pleasure and evangelical religion.¹⁵³ The evangelical churches condemned carnivals, but the young people still sought age old role reversal entertainment. Only the boys switched roles, though, because the young people viewed men attempting women’s work as funnier than the reverse. Men almost never engaged in traditional women’s work and therefore had little knowledge of how to do it. But for poorer families, women often had to do men’s work. For the status conscious middle class community, it was more degrading for women to do men’s work than it was funny.¹⁵⁴ At the “tacky party” all the guests wore “disgraceful attire” and introduced themselves by assumed names like “Miss Yellow.” Whoever dressed the worst won a “cotton cake” as a booby prize.¹⁵⁵ Hattie Martin won, but Nannie cried foul play since the boys stole everybody else’s bows and stuck them on

¹⁵¹Ibid., 9 April 1897.

¹⁵²Ibid., 5 April 1901.

¹⁵³Ownby, *Subduing Satan*, 95-96..

¹⁵⁴Allen, *Labor of Women*, 142; Dolores Janiewski, “Sisters Under Their Skins: Southern Working Women, 1880-1950,” in *Sex, Race, and the Role of Women in the South* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1983), 15.

¹⁵⁵Dorroh dairy, 26 December 1899.

her.¹⁵⁶ Since evangelical religion also condemned masquerade parties, the tacky parties gave the young people an opportunity to experiment with other identities. While pretending to be someone else, they could gain more courage for flirtation while still avoiding the sinful masquerade party.¹⁵⁷

In addition to the occasional parties, Nannie had opportunities to socialize with the Driftwood crowd on a regular basis at the weekly lyceums on Friday or Saturday night.¹⁵⁸ The lyceums provided additional opportunities for a young man to escort a young woman out for the evening.¹⁵⁹ One person acted as president each week and three different people judged the debate. While attending high school, Nannie and her friends often went to the Dripping Springs lyceums but later started their own “society.”¹⁶⁰ Nannie first mentioned a Driftwood lyceum on 2 January 1897, but since her diary from 1896 is missing, she and her friends may have organized the initial lyceum during that period. Nannie described their debate on 6 February 1897 as a “grand time” and later boasted that Sydney Young of Dripping Springs complimented how well their society was doing for being new.¹⁶¹ Not every meeting, however, was a success. Nannie wrote,

¹⁵⁶Ibid.

¹⁵⁷Ownby, *Subduing Satan*.

¹⁵⁸Nannie attended approximately twelve to fifteen parties a year, usually in clumps. The lyceum was held on Friday night when the church had preaching on Saturday night.

¹⁵⁹Dorroh diary., 26 June 1897; 23 April, 28 May 1898.

¹⁶⁰Ibid., 2 February 1895.

¹⁶¹Ibid., 6 February, 27 June 1897.

“all you could hear was pecans and *hull gull*” to describe one particularly dull evening.¹⁶² When few people turned out for the lyceum, the participants voted on whether or not to disband the meetings at least temporarily.¹⁶³

The debate was the center of the evening. Groups from Driftwood continued traveling to the lyceums of other nearby communities to visit with the young people and listen to their debates.¹⁶⁴ In 1900 Nannie and her friends went to Dripping Springs to hear their friend Mercer Chapman participate in a debate against the young people of Buda. The topic was “resolved: ‘That the signs of the times indicate the downfall of our nation.’” Buda’s team won, but, more importantly to Nannie, “the Dripping Springs boys were better looking.”¹⁶⁵ The debates illuminated two characteristics of the rural experience for young people at the turn of the century. First of all, Nannie’s comment that she cared more for the appearance of the young men than the content of what they argued once again supported the theme throughout her diary that, as a young woman, social interaction almost always dominated the event itself. Nannie never expressed any passion about the topic being debated while commenting about the evening in her diary.¹⁶⁶ Nonetheless, the selected topics still provided insight into the current issues of the period that interested the young people. The topic Mercer Chapman debated was

¹⁶²Ibid., 2 October 1897.

¹⁶³Ibid., 9 July 1898; 18 May 1899.

¹⁶⁴Ibid., 1 April 1899.

¹⁶⁵Ibid., 6 July 1900.

¹⁶⁶Ibid., 25 September 1897.

interesting because evangelical preachers in the 1890s continually stressed the break down of moral society.¹⁶⁷ While the young people seemingly regarded the church as a social institution, the preachers obviously influenced them and their view of the world so much so that they used familiar sermons to entertain themselves on the weekend.

A couple of years earlier, the Driftwood lyceum debated the topic “Resolved: ‘That there’s more happiness in single life than married.’” The judges decided in favor of married life, but the girls complained because all three judges were male. As was consistent with their cohort, many young women were questioning the life cycle which mandated that they marry. Thus, Nannie’s age cohort participated in debates around the country with similar topics such as a rural debate in South Holland, Illinois in 1907 which historian Gerda Lerner included in her book *The Female Experience*. Twenty-five-year-old Rena Rietveld, who would marry at age twenty-eight, debated that women should receive educations so they can enter into professions and “escape slavery,” as she called marriage.¹⁶⁸ Historian Karen Lystra noted that in the 1890s popular magazines routinely published articles about the increased number of unhappy marriages, what they dubbed “the marriage problem.” Lystra argued that young women born between 1860 and 1880 increasingly viewed women as the primary sufferers in bad marriages and so postponed marriage or forewent the institution all together more than any other generation in

¹⁶⁷Ownby, *Subduing Satan*, 122-143.

¹⁶⁸Dorroh diary, 23 April 1898; Gerda Lerner, ed., *The Female Experience: An American Documentary* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 249-250.

American history.¹⁶⁹ The debates often held in rural communities reflected the major trends in the United States which they believed would make an impact on their quality of life.

In addition to the debates, each Driftwood lyceum included “the paper.” A group of two or three young adults would get together a few days before the night to write news and “manufacture a joke or two.”¹⁷⁰ If they could overcome the chronic problem of “no news,” writing the paper could be as much fun as the lyceum itself.¹⁷¹ When it was Nannie’s turn to write the paper with Jim Black and Bob Odom, she described the day as a “regular jollification” despite the fact that they accidentally dumped over the bottle of ink and ruined her shirtwaist.¹⁷² The next day Nannie said she added the word “cashaw” to the paper. Evidently, Nannie thought it was funny when one of her friends misspoke and so she planned to tease that person at the lyceum.¹⁷³ While she enjoyed writing the paper with her friends, Nannie felt put upon when left to write the paper by herself.¹⁷⁴ One week Nannie not only wrote the paper alone, but she had to read it along with another

¹⁶⁹Karen Lystra, *Searching the Heart: Women, Men, and Romantic in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 247-249. Nannie was born 21 October 1876.

¹⁷⁰Dorroh diary, 4 September 1897; 7 July 1898.

¹⁷¹Ibid., 22 January, 21 April, 26, 28 May, 22 July 1897; 7 July, 7, 13 October, 1898; 9 April 1902.

¹⁷²Ibid., 23 September 1897.

¹⁷³Ibid., 24 September 1897.

¹⁷⁴Ibid., 11 September 1897.

piece the night of the lyceum. She decided “next time that’s more than I’m going to do.”¹⁷⁵ In addition, she was offended by comments made by some of her male relatives that she and her female friends were too dependent. Nannie used the paper to offer up several jabs back at the boys. After the lyceum, some of the boys criticized the paper she wrote for its severity.¹⁷⁶ Nannie decided she would have to be more careful about what she wrote in the future, but she also thought the boys would be more careful about what they said to the girls. As with their other entertainments, the lyceum provided a stage for the usually good-natured rivalry between the boys and girls.

The masculine popularity of baseball in the 1890s aroused Nannie’s competition with the boys in her community. In Driftwood, baseball was a homosocial activity which Nannie resented because it siphoned attention away from the girls. She would ask her diary why every picnic had to be ruined by baseball. “Baseball failed, I was so glad of that. Think it’s a shame can’t have a picnic without that.”¹⁷⁷ Nannie had enjoyed playing baseball on the schoolyard, but the organized games excluded women. Members of the community were welcome to cheer at the games, but Nannie did not enjoy watching them. She would rather have the boys play croquet with the girls. When the Driftwood baseball team traveled to Austin to play in a tournament game, Nannie wrote, “I hope they will get beaten then they will stay.”¹⁷⁸ She failed to get her wish, however, because

¹⁷⁵Ibid., 23 April 1898.

¹⁷⁶Ibid., 24 April 1898.

¹⁷⁷Ibid., 11 May 1901.

¹⁷⁸Ibid., 2 August 1895.

the baseball team traveled to Kyle the following week to continue in the tournament. At the game Nannie's brother-in-law, Laurel Hall, seriously injured himself and so had to stay in Kyle for a week. Nannie missed out on social events like going to the revival at Thomas Springs because she had to help her sister Kate and her mother while Laurel was incapacitated.¹⁷⁹ Nannie believed baseball detracted from her social life and so had no use for it. Historians have documented the boys' activity of baseball, but not the impact it might have had on the rest of the community or the self esteem of young women who also wanted a place to belong.

In order to have something they could define as their own, the unmarried young women formed a homosocial club named "Just Us Girls" in May of 1894. They met approximately once a week at various community households and sent away for badges and a J.U.G. lamp.¹⁸⁰ At age eighteen, Nannie represented one of the youngest members, but all the women were as yet unmarried. To celebrate the first anniversary of J.U.G., the young women organized a concert at which they provided a nice supper and gave away a cake as a door prize.¹⁸¹ The club used their profit from the concert to buy a chandelier for the church.¹⁸² Their fund raising was similar to the activities of a J.U.G. club in Amarillo

¹⁷⁹Ibid., 6, 8 August 1895.

¹⁸⁰Ibid., 4, 15, 27 September 1894. The first week they met at Mr. McClintocks,' and the second week they met at Grandpa's, Thomas Martin. The meetings were not set on a certain day of the week.

¹⁸¹Ibid., 31 May 1895.

¹⁸²Ibid., 1 June 1895.

which raised money for the city's first library in 1900.¹⁸³ Nannie, however, seemed less concerned about the benevolent activities of the club than the girls' on going rivalry with the boys. At one meeting the girls found the boys' group baseball pictures and opened them. Nannie wrote, "They're sure good...some said the boys would be mad, but we didn't care if they would."¹⁸⁴ The boys tended to be as equally disrespectful of the girls. Bill and Johnie McClintock, Ed Garison, and Tom Martin tried to break up one of the meetings.

So we left them and went upstairs right soon.
When lo! And behold! They'd locked Hattie up in the room.
Finally we disgusted them and they went to the baseball.
We had an excellent J. U. G. after all!¹⁸⁵

Nannie's cousin, Charlie Clarke, entered into the raillery and asked to join their club saying his long-tailed coat would suffice as a mother hubbard.¹⁸⁶

Because Nannie and her friends competed with the boys, the success of the J.U.G. club was important. After one "splendid" J.U.G. meeting, Nannie celebrated, "Oh! Yes, boys, it's outlasting your baseball you see. The Barton boys didn't come to play, that's a slight."¹⁸⁷ The boys seemed equally amused when the J.U.G. meetings had a poor turnout

¹⁸³ Priscilla Thompson, "'Just Us Girls' Started Library in 1900," *Amarillo Sunday News-Globe*, 23 August 1987; Virginia Browder, *Tude Harrell: Gay 90's Girl in Old Amarillo 1881-1963* (Quanah Press: Nortex Press, 1976), 47-49.

¹⁸⁴Dorroh diary, 24 August 1895.

¹⁸⁵Ibid., 11 May 1895.

¹⁸⁶Ibid., 13 April 1895.

¹⁸⁷Ibid., 27 April 1895.

or the girls could think of nothing to do.¹⁸⁸ One time when Nannie openly admitted a meeting floundered, she wrote “Guilf [Martin] was sure tickled.”¹⁸⁹ The boys even provoked the girls by threatening to boycott their anniversary concert, but that night Bill McClintock came to escort Nannie and the evening was a “splendid success.”¹⁹⁰ Nannie wrote, “The boys said they were surprised, they expected to be ashamed.”¹⁹¹ The next week, the girls reorganized the J.U.G. to start fresh for the following year, but by fall they disbanded the club for good.¹⁹² Nannie said too many girls had left for school or were away teaching.¹⁹³ Furthermore, the members, or at least Nannie, seemed to organize the club out of spite. Nannie’s only comments about the club’s activities involved the male intrusions which made the meetings fun; without them the girls had no purpose.

In fact, most of the young women preferred their heterosocial activities. Nannie often competed with her friends for male attention. After Jim and Garret Black, Bob Odom, and Johnie McClintock called one Sunday evening, Nannie wrote “I got several jokes on myself and attracted their [the boys] attention.”¹⁹⁴ While attending school in Dripping Springs, Nannie became jealous after she saw Edgar Howard out late on the

¹⁸⁸Ibid., 10 November 1894.

¹⁸⁹Ibid., 19 October 1895.

¹⁹⁰Ibid., 31 May 1897. Nannie reminisced about the evening to her diary.

¹⁹¹Ibid., 31 May 1895.

¹⁹²Ibid., 8 June 1895.

¹⁹³Ibid., 2 November 1895.

¹⁹⁴Ibid., 18 April 1897.

porch with Lucy Black. When Lucy fell ill the next morning, Nannie chastised her, “must act right,” even though Nannie spent late nights on the porch with boys herself.¹⁹⁵ Lucy and her brother moved to a new boarding place away from Edgar several weeks later, and Nannie wrote “hey day” celebrating Lucy’s loss of advantage.¹⁹⁶ When Edgar’s brother, Jim, called on Nannie, she boasted, “Yes Lucy, I’m ahead of you.” Two days later Jim took Nannie to prayer meeting, and Nannie gloated, “one more ahead.”¹⁹⁷ Two years later Nannie still kept count, “Ah! now Lucy, I went with him [Jim Howard] that’s one on you.” Of course Lucy Black was not Nannie’s only rival in northern Hays County. When she learned that her cousin Mary Garison went to Bear Creek with Jim Eckols, Nannie cried, “Boo hoo! You see he slighted me!” Nannie inadvertently heard about the date from Jim’s sister, Annie Eckols Howard, who was Edgar Howard’s new bride. Once again, Nannie chastised her friend, “Miss Mary’s somewhat lazy this morn, But I can’t prevail on her that she oughtn’t have gone.” Nannie continued to protest when the very next day Mary visited Jim and then he brought her home. Nevertheless, Jim took Nannie to church on Sunday once again giving her the opportunity to simper, “Oh! Yes, Mary, you can’t entirely possess him.”¹⁹⁸ Even though Nannie often pouted or gloated depending on her loss of advantage or gain thereof, the rivalries never once caused a rift between friends. For the most part the young men and women alternated partners within

¹⁹⁵Ibid., 27 November 1894.

¹⁹⁶Ibid., 8 January 1895.

¹⁹⁷Ibid., 18, 20 January 1895.

¹⁹⁸Ibid., 16, 17, 18 July 1902.

their social network quite easily, and everyone appeared to have a good time.

Nannie greatly enjoyed her social life as a young woman in Driftwood. She engaged in some sort of social activity about 250 days a year. During the height of each social season--June, July, and August--Nannie either received callers or went visiting on about 86 percent of the days. Because of her active social life, Nannie Dorroh resisted temptations to leave Driftwood.¹⁹⁹ In the ageless idealism of youth, Nannie wished she could freeze time with her friends. When the Dorrohs moved to Leander in 1902, twenty-seven-year-old Nannie took the move hard. She sank into a depression which she tried to fight because it was "not proper to bring everyone else down."²⁰⁰ She moped around the house making no effort to meet her neighbors; "Made my first Williamson County visit this eve...for six weeks have only been in one house. Sounds like anything else but me."²⁰¹ Nannie had enjoyed attending Sunday school in Driftwood but showed little interest in Leander.²⁰² When the community gave Nannie a permanent Sunday school class, she felt annoyed rather than pleased with the responsibility because she would then have to go every week.²⁰³ Nannie also rebelled when given a part in the community play in Leander.²⁰⁴ She had enjoyed practicing for and performing in plays in Driftwood and

¹⁹⁹Ibid., 29 January 1897.

²⁰⁰Ibid., 26 May 1903.

²⁰¹Ibid., 12 May 1903.

²⁰²Ibid., 22 March, 12 April 1903.

²⁰³Ibid., 22 November 1903.

²⁰⁴Ibid., 1, 3 December 1903.

Dripping Springs with her friends even though the preparation was an enormous amount of work.²⁰⁵ In Leander, however, because Nannie had few acquaintances and did not seem to care to make any more, she asked her school trustees for permission to refuse the part.

Most of all, Nannie complained about the fact that there were “no beaux up this way.”²⁰⁶ Nannie could barely bring herself to tolerate the festivities at Christmas time and missed the community tree in Driftwood. Even worse, in honor of the upcoming leap year, her new community hosted a series of parties where boys and girls were randomly matched as dates. Nannie drily wrote that there were “certainly some mismatches if one was ever seen.”²⁰⁷ At age twenty-eight, Nannie had a hard time being a good sport about being matched with boys ten years younger than herself. In Driftwood, enough of the boys remained unmarried within her that age group that finding an appropriate escort never became a problem. The Dorrohs’ move to Leander only intensified Nannie’s desire to marry someone from and live in Driftwood.

²⁰⁵Ibid., 26 October 1895; 16 February 1897.

²⁰⁶Ibid., 10 April 1903.

²⁰⁷Ibid., 29 December 1903.

CHAPTER III

IDENTITY AND IDEOLOGY

Nannie Dorroh defined herself through race, class consciousness, and the established gender roles of her era. Often, her definition included more of what she was not and never would be than what she was. She was not an African-American; she was not a migrant worker; she was not a man. She molded her behavior around the stereotypes of people she read in newspapers, magazines, novels, and the conventions she heard her friends and relatives repeat. Nannie prized the social status of her white skin by embracing her Confederate heritage. She believed denigrating minorities raised her own social position. Nannie's family and community belonged to the nebulous, American middle class. They struggled for wants rather than needs, working hard for what they had while always wanting more than they could afford. Nannie cherished her roots while wanting to appear as if she belonged to a class just beyond her reach. As a woman, she wanted to achieve the status of lady. But she was also conscious that her ability to raise her status in the world was limited because she was a woman. She believed that only men could go out and conquer the world, and even if she herself was capable, then such a success would keep her from being a lady. Nannie's choices, decisions, and actions reflected her race, class, and gender and their importance in her world.

Nannie's Confederate heritage fueled her racism. Both branches of Nannie's family tree reflected middling slaveholding status. Her father's Scotch-Irish ancestors, James and Jane Dorroh, immigrated from County Antrim, Ireland to Charleston, South

Carolina circa 1775. The family established a farm in Gray Court, South Carolina.¹ David Ross Dorroh, Nannie's grandfather and the grandson of James and Jane Dorroh, died in 1860 leaving his wife, Susan Lewers Dorroh, eleven slaves two of whom were sold to pay off his debts. He left the final balance of his estate, \$8959.60, to his wife to be divided among his children on her death.² Two of his sons died in the Battle of Fredericksburg in 1862. His eldest son, a captain in the Confederate States Army, moved to Mississippi in 1866 and died shortly thereafter in 1870. David Lewers Dorroh, Nannie's father and himself a Confederate veteran, also moved to Mississippi where he married Mattie Elizabeth Martin. William Thomas Dorroh, David's only surviving brother who was one year older than himself, gained control of the family property where his mother continued to live until her death in 1902.³ In 1899 Nannie visited Gray Court where she met her grandmother and cousins for the first time. While she made no mention of the size of her uncle's property, she did mention that he owned a store, and she went with her cousin to deliver beef. The round included at least one black family.⁴ Like the Dorrohs, the Martins of Senatobia, Mississippi were middling slave owners, and

¹Henry Poellnitz Johnston, *Pioneers in Their Own Rights* (Birmingham: Featon Press, 1964), 233.

²Ibid., 495. According to the research of Kenneth Stampp, the majority of slave holders did not have the twenty slaves necessary to qualify for the planter class. Seventy-two percent held less than ten slaves and fifty percent held less than five. Kenneth Stampp, *The Peculiar Institution: Slavery in the Antebellum South* (New York: Vintage Books, 1956), 30.

³Johnston, *Pioneers*, 397.

⁴Dorroh diary, 24 July 1899.

Nannie's grandfather, Thomas Martin, served in the Confederate Army.⁵

In 1896, Nannie's community began hosting an annual Confederate reunion that glorified the Old South and its lost cause. Typically, about two thousand people traveled to Driftwood each year to "celebrate the victory of their sublime defeat."⁶ In 1901 Price Rogers of Kyle gave the welcome address.

[There is] no greater inspiration to youth than heroic life. And at no time can any country furnish so many lives of sublime devotion to lofty ideals--lives that were lovely in every human relation as well--as our own South.⁷

Obviously, the speaker believed slavery was consistent with his assertion that Southerners "were lovely in every human relation." In 1902 Nannie participated in the presentation by reciting Father Abram Ryan's famous poem "The Conquered Banner" in honor of the veterans.⁸ The most recognized stanzas read as follows:

Furl its folds though now we must.
Furl that banner! Softly, slowly,
Treat it gently--it is holy--
For it droops above the dead;
Touch it not, unfold it never,
Let it droop there, furled forever,
For its peoples' hopes are dead.⁹

⁵Harding Papers. Thomas Bond, personal interview, 17 January 1997, Driftwood, Texas. While not as much information is available about the history of the Martin family in Mississippi, the documents and papers of the Martin family contain receipts for land, farm equipment, and slaves.

⁶Dorroh diary, August 1903. Newspaper clipping inserted in the diary.

⁷Ibid., August 1901. Newspaper clipping inserted in the diary.

⁸Ibid., 9 August 1902.

⁹As quoted in Rollin G. Osterweis, *The Myth of the Lost Cause 1865-1900* (Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1973), 96-97.

After she finished reading the poem, she presented the veterans with a bouquet. Nannie felt honored that the reunion committee--of which her father was a member--asked her to read the poem because reunions from all over the South commonly invited an attractive, young, unmarried woman to make a presentation to the veterans. The purpose, according to historian Gaines Foster, was to show the old soldiers that the Southern belles “loved them despite their defeat.”¹⁰ Because the Driftwood reunion came at the close of their annual religious revival, the romanticism of the Old South intermixed with evangelical religion suggesting that the downfall of moral society in the United States correlated with the downfall of the South.¹¹ W. W. Haupt, one of the wealthier men in Hays County, claimed that “an unchristian spirit seems to have seized individuals and nations that would forebode unholy calamity...throughout the civilized world.” Haupt argued that the patriotic reunion remained the only hope for preserving liberty and democracy.¹²

Furthermore, the romanticized doctrine of the annual Confederate reunions contradicted the celebration of freedom on Juneteenth. Juneteenth commemorated the day Texas slaves learned of their freedom after the Civil War. As celebrated, on 19 June 1865 General Granger landed at Galveston and made the announcement which officially

¹⁰Gaines M. Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy*, 137.

¹¹Dorroh diary, 11 August 1900.

¹²*Ibid.*, 11 August 1900. Haupt, a resident of Mountain City, owned over three thousand acres of land in addition to property in Buda and San Marcos. He owned fifty horses, two hundred head of cattle, and three hundred and fifty sheep. His total property value was assessed at over eleven thousand dollars. Hays County tax rolls, 1895.

freed the slaves in Texas. Nannie callously referred to the day as “nigger day.”¹³ She placed the date, June nineteenth, in quotation marks in her diary just as she occasionally did to mark a memorable day.¹⁴ Nannie often failed to mention holidays such as Easter and her birthday, but she regularly recorded Juneteenth in her diary.¹⁵ In 1901 she commented, “time rolls on and here’s one more ‘nigger’ day, why not all of us *dark* people celebrate.”¹⁶ In 1902 she described a “*black cloud*” over Onion Creek on Juneteenth and mused that “every dog has its day.”¹⁷ Lucy Black also acknowledged Juneteenth in her brief diary, “Yes I reckon all the ‘blacks’ are having ‘big times in the country.’”¹⁸

It was not surprising that Nannie and her Confederate friends had such an obsession with Juneteenth as a reminder of their perceived downfall. By the 1890s, the Confederates appeared to have shifted the blame for their lost culture from the Union to the improved status of African-Americans. Speeches at many of the reunions reaffirmed their patriotism to the United States.

The high hopes of the Confederacy lie now like sunken convoys, the principle

¹³Dorroh diary, 19 June 1897, 19 June 1901.

¹⁴Ibid., 14 February, 31 May 1895. For example, Nannie put the date of the J.U.G. convention in quotations

¹⁵Ibid., 22 October 1898.

¹⁶Ibid., 19 June 1901.

¹⁷Ibid., 19 June 1902.

¹⁸Lucy Black Martin diary, Nola Harding Papers, The Harding Foundation, Raymondville, Texas, 19 June 1898.

they fought for has passed. Above that sunken ship of stately principle, the wave of time bears to a triumphant destiny the great ship of the American Empire. All that was well in the Federal victory we do gladly and proudly acknowledge.¹⁹

The Confederate reunions did not intend to show disloyalty to the United States. When United States soldiers visited Austin in 1901 for a “sham battle” display, Nannie wrote that the soldiers made her feel patriotic.²⁰ The communities in northern Hays County had picnics on the Fourth of July, and Nannie kept American flags in her diary. Nonetheless, to make the reunions meaningful, someone had to be blamed for the destruction of Southern culture, and racism cannot be separated from the reunions. Because the freedmen remained a reminder of the loss of southern culture, they also became an easy target of white ex-Confederate aggression during the emotionally-charged reunions at the height of the emotionally-charged religious revival season.²¹

The characters of minorities were further maligned in history lessons by distorted interpretations of the Old South, the Civil War, “Radical” Reconstruction, and the Texas Revolution. In the 1890s the United Daughters of the Confederacy added to their agenda the mission to ensure that textbooks provided “a proper understanding” of the antebellum

¹⁹Dorroh diary, , August 1903. Newspaper clipping inserted in the diary. Foster claimed that Southerners who still hated the North did not go to the reunions because they could not understand the cause for celebration. Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy*, 152.

²⁰Dorroh diary, 20 July 1901.

²¹Osterweis, *Myth of the Lost Cause*, 118-126; Charles Reagan Wilson, *Baptized in Blood: The Religion of the Lost Cause 1865-1920* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1980), 24, 42. The decision to have the reunion during revival season technically had little to do with religion. Instead, they chose that season for the same reason the ministers did, that was when the farmers had a lapse in work before harvesting season began.

South and the Civil War.²² In addition to her Confederate loyalties, Nannie also demonstrated a patriotic hostility toward Mexican-Americans. While visiting the Alamo, she stole a rock from inside the walls for her keepsake box even after one of the caretakers told her it was illegal to do so. She later described how the “brave Texans” were “horribly butchered by the Mex. without feeling or care.”²³ She confessed nearly breaking into tears every year when she taught the Battle of the Alamo to her students. Of course, the version of the Alamo she related reinforced the portrayal of Mexicans as brutal and vicious. The popularity of nationalism, imperialism, and manifest destiny at the close of the nineteenth century compounded the racist interpretations by further asserting the glorified destiny of the Anglo-Saxon people.²⁴ Since de facto and de jure segregation kept children of different races and ethnicities from interacting, the racist myths continued to take root.

For the most part Nannie herself had only slight contact with minorities near her home in Driftwood. Out of a total of 225 households living in her census precinct in 1900, only one African-American family, two black servants (both living in white households), and five Mexican-American families made up the minority population.²⁵

²²As quoted in Osterweis, *Myth of the Lost Cause*, 111; Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy*, 115.

²³Dorroh diary, 18 April 1900.

²⁴James W. Vander Zanden, “The Ideology of White Supremacy,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 20 (1959): 397.

²⁵Bureau of the Census, *Schedule No. 1--Population, 1900*, Hays County, Justice Precinct No. 4.

While visiting her relatives in South Carolina Nannie saw an African-American baby and almost ran the mules into the house because she gawked so much.²⁶ When Nannie went with her aunt in South Carolina to take dirty laundry to a washwoman, she marked the event in her diary as the first time ever she was “inside *negro doors* [sic].” After returning home from her trip, Nannie mentioned the first time she saw a black passerby and thought of South Carolina where she saw African-Americans “by the wholesale.”²⁷ Nannie mentioned an African-American coming by her home in Driftwood only once. Most likely, he was migrant worker looking for employment on their farm. She recorded that her sisters “were afraid to leave & afraid to stay.” Nannie decided they would keep the dogs with them for protection from “anything of the kind” when their parents were away from home.²⁸

While Nannie never mentioned her father hiring a black person, he did employ Mexican-Americans on occasion. Nevertheless, Nannie still thought of Hispanics as an oddity. When her father hired Mexicans to clear his land, Nannie wrote that they caused “quite a stir” because they were “something we’d never been used to.” She claimed they had trouble getting her younger brothers and sisters to do their chores because of the “great curiosity.”²⁹ Nannie described the Hispanic baby she saw a few months later as

²⁶Dorroh diary, 2 July 1899. Nannie used the terms darky, black, negro, and nigger interchangeably in her diary throughout the entire period of the study.

²⁷Ibid., 2 October 1899.

²⁸Ibid., 12 October 1899.

²⁹Ibid., 13, 14 January 1900.

“quite a show” and said that it reminded her of the black baby she saw the previous summer.³⁰ While teaching in Fitzhugh the following year, Nannie described an “uproar” at school when a “colony of Mexicans passed--old, young, big & small--’twas a sight.” Nannie wrote that she excused the children for their behavior because she reacted the same way.³¹ Her ignorance of African Americans and Hispanics fed the stereotypes she believed.

Nannie often expressed her stereotypes by contrasting the inferior characteristics of minorities with those of Anglos like herself. After an illness Nannie wrote, “I’m almost respectable once more. Will be like white folks in a day or so.”³² She assumed that, when her own faculties were below par because of her illness, she was more like an African-American or a Mexican-American than a white person. Even while healthy, Nannie compared her own lethargy to the stereotypical yardstick of African-American indolence. After skipping her nap for a week while nursing several sick family members, Nannie contemplated, “and I’ve always been ‘nigger’ enough to just drop down.”³³ Even worse, she sometimes portrayed people of color more like animals than white folk. In Duggerville she described passing a “swarm of Mex.” and commented that “such a clatter I never heard.”³⁴ She chose to use the term, “swarm,” which more accurately described

³⁰Ibid., 22 March 1900.

³¹Ibid., 3 December 1901.

³²Ibid., 11 April 1899.

³³Ibid., 25 June 1900.

³⁴Ibid., 4 January 1903.

insects than human beings. Furthermore, while coming home from a picnic with a dozen friends (which she did not define as a swarm), Nannie automatically assumed the Mexican man they almost ran over was drunk. They neither stopped to confirm her suspicions nor to see if the man was alright.³⁵ Nannie contrasted her temperate community with intemperate minorities who presumably stayed up all night being rowdy and causing trouble. She made comments in her diary such as “we must retire as *white* folks should” after having a pillow fight late in the evening.³⁶

Nannie also seemed to believe that Germans were somewhat less refined than Anglos. When she contracted nettle rash, she wrote that she was ashamed to be seen because she looked like “some big, old, coarse, Dutch girl.”³⁷ While Nannie never taught an African-American or Mexican-American student, she did have a handful of German students while teaching in Duggerville.³⁸ When Nannie punished one of her German students, Albert, for using profanity in class, she said she hated to do it because she assumed “he’s just educated in cursing at home.”³⁹ Throughout her nine years of teaching, this was the only occasion in which Nannie implied bad parenting. Ironically, several statements made in her diary implied that her German students were often her most enthusiastic pupils and had the best attendance. Furthermore, Albert’s mother

³⁵Ibid., 8 June 1901.

³⁶Ibid., 21 November 1899; 6 June 1901.

³⁷Ibid., 23 March 1902. Nannie distorted *Deutsche* (German) as Dutch.

³⁸Ibid., 22 February 1903.

³⁹Ibid., 11 December 1902.

remained the only parent to come to school for a conference about her son. After the conference, Nannie concluded that the trouble was probably caused by some of the older students more so than him.⁴⁰ Most likely, since Albert's first language was German, some of the other children taught him the profane words as a joke. Since his family spoke German in the home and would not have used English profanity Nannie had no reason to assume bad parenting in a German household except her own bigotry. Nonetheless, Nannie never conveyed the contempt for Germans that she expressed toward African-Americans and Mexican-Americans.

A confrontation Nannie described with an African-American woman during a trip to San Marcos illustrated her contemptuous behavior toward people of color. After the incident, she wrote:

And never was I scared as badly--no never.
An old negro woman almost crowded me off the walk,
'Cousin Joe' *just took her by the arm & sit her off.*
It scared me I didn't know what's taking place.
He said no negro should treat a lady he was with that way.
He was so funny about it, sure made the sister mad.
She forever preached his funeral from way back [sic].⁴¹

Nannie and her friends were walking to church when the incident occurred. On the way back from preaching she expressed relief that they "didn't have to put any *darkies off the walk.*" It is absurd to imagine that Nannie felt alarmed. The only person who could have justifiably felt any fear was the elderly woman thrown off the sidewalk. Rather, the root of Nannie's alarm was the threat to the superior social status of her white skin that the

⁴⁰Ibid., 12 December 1902.

⁴¹Ibid., 17 April 1899.

black woman openly challenged. The African-American community in central Texas did not cower. The woman Nannie and her friends encountered did not feel the need to automatically give way on the sidewalk nor did she refrain from giving them a piece of her mind after roughly being put in the street.

During Nannie's trip Mississippi and South Carolina in 1899, she witnessed a different relationship between blacks and whites. One of the first incidents to make an impression on her was the obeisance of the African-Americans in Mississippi.

The 'niggers' here are the greatest show.
See so many that mama and papa use to know.
They ask so many questions, seem glad to see me,
One of them actually had to *kiss* me on the *sleeve*.⁴²

The scene described above differs greatly from the one in San Marcos just a couple of weeks before. It would be hard to imagine the elderly woman who gave Nannie and her friends a tongue lashing for putting her into the street actually kissing a white person's sleeve. Likewise, the blacks who Nannie met in her mother's hometown would have given way on the sidewalk long before being put in the street. Central Texas had not had the plantations and large scale slaveholding of Mississippi and South Carolina. At the turn of the century the elders of Hays County shared the recalcitrant attitude of younger generation blacks who never lived on plantations. Because she witnessed the degradation of a large number of blacks for the first time, Nannie's trip through the deep South strengthened her belief in the superiority of white skin.

Nannie agreed with the "experts" who purported that the innate inferiority of

⁴²Ibid., 4 May 1899.

blacks prevented them from ever being fully assimilated in society because biologically they could not attain the educational and moral echelon of whites.⁴³ At one of Driftwood's lyceums, the topic of debate was the resolution: "the negro should be colonized." Nannie said she thought "civilizing the black" would be "first rate," but comments made throughout her diary indicate that she did not believe that possible. Nannie applied similar stereotypes to Hispanics. She imagined African-Americans and Mexican-Americans as jolly, singing, lazy, stupid, and criminal--all at one time. One rainy night in Duggerville, in the house where she boarded, Nannie observed the seemingly carefree attitude of the Duggers' African-American employee.

Nothing bothers 'nigger' Will, he's always jolly,
Rain, cold nor mud--nothing fazes him hardly.
Is unusually jolly, singing *much* this evening,
But I think being a negro would hurt my feelings.⁴⁴

After watching guards load inmates on a prison train in Austin, Nannie noted how sad the white prisoners looked while simultaneously concluding that "the negroes seemed glad of a trip."⁴⁵

Out of the contradictory group of adjectives she used to describe minorities, Nannie's reference to people of color as lazy was the most ironic because minorities did the work she complained about the most vehemently. After witnessing African-

⁴³Vander Zanden, "Ideology of White Supremacy," 392-393. Vander Zanden quoted E. H. Randle of Virginia who wrote in 1910 that "I would place the matured capacity of the black at about eighteen, and of the white at about thirty. This makes a wide difference in the benefit the two may receive by training."

⁴⁴Dorroh diary, 1 February 1903.

⁴⁵Ibid., 24 December 1902.

Americans completing laborious tasks for whites on a daily basis in the deep South, Nannie began referring to herself as black when she performed those tasks.⁴⁶ One time after scouring the house Nannie wrote that she “just got down like an old *darkie* & rubbed.”⁴⁷ While in Mississippi, Nannie and her relatives sought out blacks to complete the jobs which Nannie herself disliked.

We tried the ‘niggers’ all around,
But not one, to suit us, have we found.
So this morn we undertook to wash ourselves.⁴⁸

After returning from Mississippi and South Carolina Nannie wrote in her diary that she had been spoiled while gone. She referred to herself as “fat and black” while she did her laundry and wished she had brought back a black servant to do the wash.⁴⁹ It never seemed to occur to her the contradiction between calling minorities lazy and comparing herself to an African-American whenever she worked the hardest physically. Nannie apparently agreed with the philosophy behind the Jim Crow laws that social control was necessary to ensure that minorities accomplished the hard manual tasks assigned to their station in life.

Nannie also stereotyped people of color as vicious and believed she had more to fear in race relations than they did. Much of this belief stemmed from the widely held

⁴⁶Ibid., 17 January 1903.

⁴⁷Ibid., 6 August 1902.

⁴⁸Ibid., 26 May 1899.

⁴⁹Ibid., 23 August 1899.

notion that black men had an animalistic and insatiable appetite for white women.⁵⁰ Once when Nannie and her cousin Mary Garrison walked home from their grandfather's, they became frightened because they mistook Nannie's father for a black man. Nannie wrote, "Oh! me, I couldn't run any further nor made my steps any bigger."⁵¹ Another time she mentioned seeing a "big, old, ugly Mex." on the way home from Buda. She wrote, "Law me! Mary & I would have had *fits* if we had seen him with his pack."⁵² Nannie's use of another animalistic term to refer to Hispanics implied that meeting Mexican-Americans along the road was as threatening as running into a pack of wolves. While Nannie boarded with the Duggers in a community with a relatively large number of minorities, she expressed her fear to leave the house even to go out to the mailbox.⁵³ She especially worried about having to walk to school each day. She complained, "Don't feel any too safe to go alone and open up that house (school), there's entirely too many Mex. & negroes [sic] around."⁵⁴

Despite her fears Nannie never once mentioned a minority tangibly bothering her in any manner, but she could not claim the reverse. Nannie and her friends enjoyed interrupting black church services because they found the ebullient style of African-

⁵⁰Vander Zaden, "Ideology of White Suprmacy," 401; George M. Frederickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind: The Debate on Afro-American Character and Destiny, 1817-1914* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1971), 276-277.

⁵¹Dorroh diary, 21 March 1897.

⁵²Ibid., 1 July 1897.

⁵³Ibid., 8 November 1902.

⁵⁴Ibid., 22 January 1903.

American worship entertaining.⁵⁵ During her trip to Mississippi Nannie and her friends drove right up to the windows of a black church and peeped in “awhile” at the worshipers. Later, she remembered that she could hardly breathe throughout the “scarey time.”⁵⁶ While Nannie expressed no remorse in disturbing someone’s Christian services, she did convey the thrill of doing so. Two years later, Nannie described her own terror when two boys were “skulking and prying” around the Pound’s Chapel School where she taught, “creeping up and peeping in thru cracks.”⁵⁷ Probably, the same account would have accurately described her activities at the black church in Mississippi, but she failed to make the connection.

Nannie also interrupted two African-American religious revival meetings, and Lucy Black intruded on at least one.⁵⁸ In 1899 Nannie went to her first black revival meeting with her cousins in South Carolina, and she admitted she laughed out loud at “such carrying on.” Even though some of the black participants politely invited them in, Nannie and her group sat in the last row putting a male cousin on each end of the bench for protection.⁵⁹ Later, she wrote that they were “well paid” for their time because the

⁵⁵Ibid., 17 December 1902.

⁵⁶Ibid., 2 June 1899.

⁵⁷Ibid., 2 March 1901.

⁵⁸In his book, Stephen Nissenbaum included a picture of the cover of a collection of minstrel songs from 1840 written and performed by Thomas Rice. One of the songs was titled “Trip to Nigger Meeting” using the same language that Nannie used. Nissenbaum, *Battle for Christmas*, 127.

⁵⁹Dorroh diary, 10 August 1899.

meeting “was certainly funny.” They enjoyed the show so much, they planned to go back a few days later. But at the last minute, they changed their minds and went on a hay ride instead.⁶⁰ Four years later, Nannie went to another black religious revival in Duggerville. Although she thought it “right comical” when eight people were baptized, this time she “tried to keep quiet.”⁶¹ Nannie witnessed many baptisms at white revivals but never commented that they were remotely humorous to her.⁶² In 1898 after the closing of the white revival in McDade, Lucy Black and a crowd of her friends went over to an African-American revival which she described as “quite a curiosity.”⁶³

Neither Nannie nor Lucy ever mentioned a black or Hispanic person attending a white religious service or camp meeting. If African-Americans had attended a white revival and laughed at the participants burning playing cards, smashing whiskey bottles, or shouting at the top of their lungs, they would have at least suffered arrest for disturbing the peace, a price Nannie and her friends did not have to worry about paying.⁶⁴ Minorities could not safely consider going to a white meeting out of curiosity, to make fun, or even to worship. Segregation implied that blacks could not attend white social gatherings, but whites freely did as they pleased. If any black participants had become angry at the lack of respect shown them and attempted to throw out the intruders, the

⁶⁰Ibid., 14 August 1899.

⁶¹Ibid., 30 August 1903.

⁶²Ibid., 25 August 1901.

⁶³Black diary, 4 July 1898.

⁶⁴Ownby, *Subduing Satan*, 157.

blacks would have paid the consequences. Nevertheless, Nannie still imagined that she and her friends were the ones who should feel threatened in the situation. At the heart of Nannie's racism was an irrational but intense fear of a group of people whom the white majority kept powerless.

Nonetheless, Nannie's fear of minorities somewhat subsided when she had greater interaction with them and found that none attacked or threatened her. She wrote, "[I] past by a nigger house, imagine me so brave, I'm getting less afraid of them everyday."⁶⁵ While boarding in Duggerville, she developed a casual, but paternalistic, acquaintance with African-Americans for the first time. Two African-American men, Will and Bill, worked for the Duggers. Nannie patronizingly gave Will credit for "another smart fit" when he made the fires in the morning. When Nannie knitted Will a pair of gloves, she boasted "how proud he was" of her gift to him. During inclement weather Nannie sometimes gave Will a nickel to take her letter to the mail box.⁶⁶ Will and Bill endured Nannie's patronizing behavior because their livelihoods depended on a daily interaction with whites. They could not afford to act as recalcitrant as some of the blacks of Hays County where there were fewer minority laborers. A similar relationship probably existed between the whites and Hispanics as well. Nannie felt more comfortable around minorities in Duggerville because the people of color reinforced her claim to superiority by cowering to her rather than challenging her assumption of the superior social status of her skin.

⁶⁵Dorroh diary, 27 May 1899.

⁶⁶Ibid., 5, 14 February 1903.

But Nannie was not satisfied feeling superior to minorities, she also wanted to attain status within the white community. She assumed most of the strangers who wandered through northern Hays County were inferior to her and her friends. On one occasion, Nannie wrote that she and her sister Mag “had to run from an old tramp” while walking the two miles to the Garisons.⁶⁷ The “tramps” Nannie often referred to were most likely migrant laborers looking for work.⁶⁸ Nannie did not show disdain for all people passing through the area, however, but distinguished gentlemen strangers from tramps by the person’s attire and deportment. When she met up with a nice looking young man who spoke politely to her, she concluded he was not a tramp.⁶⁹ Nannie understood her own classification as lady was tenuous at best and so was conscious of the way others addressed her. In Fitzhugh Nannie was offended when a gentleman did not acknowledge her at first. He finally tipped his hat and bowed his head so Nannie decided his manners were not “paralyzed” after all.⁷⁰ Nannie was embarrassed when the “tacky couple” almost sat by her at church. She said Bob Odom teased her mercilessly.⁷¹ Nannie wanted to separate herself from anyone that might lower her status through association.

Because Nannie equated appearance with class, she was always conscious of her

⁶⁷Ibid., 29 December 1897; 10 July 1900.

⁶⁸Ibid., 23 September 1901.

⁶⁹Ibid., 16 February 1899.

⁷⁰Ibid., 25 February 1902.

⁷¹Ibid., 7 August 1897.

own attire, that of her family, and that of her community. When visitors from out of town attended the community's church and social gatherings, Nannie worried that Driftwood might appear as a settlement of dirt farmers rather than a respectable middle class community. She chastised her neighbors when only Wesley Puryear, Jim Howard, and Tyson Odom dressed up for church. "[I] Don't know what our country's coming to, guess we girls'll be wearing our jumpers soon."⁷² Nannie emphatically disapproved when her cousin Ed Garison wore a jumper and sombrero to church.⁷³ Even when dress codes were admittedly relaxed, Nannie still acted self-consciously. At the end of the Confederate reunion in 1901, Nannie went "too dirty" for preaching and so hid in the back of the church, but she noted that some still looked worse. When the young women wore tea-saques and jumpers to church the next morning, Nannie scolded, "a tougher set of girls I never saw."⁷⁴ A few weeks later Nannie observed that shirtwaists "were in full sway" for the girls and that many of the boys did not wear coats. She admonished that their attire was "alright for work but not for church."⁷⁵

Despite some lapses in decorum, the Driftwood community remained relatively well dressed in fashionable clothing.⁷⁶ Nannie's aunt Phoebe Martin, a milliner in Austin,

⁷²Ibid., 11 June 1902. A jumper was a loose fitting shirt or jacket worn by workmen or a sleeveless dress usually worn with a blouse for women. *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, 10th ed., s. v. "Jumper."

⁷³Dorroh diary, 20 September 1897.

⁷⁴Ibid., 10, 11 August 1901.

⁷⁵Ibid., 25 August 1901.

⁷⁶Ibid., 23 February 1897.

brought her friends and relatives “dots” of the latest styles.⁷⁷ When Nannie’s cousin Joe Petty and his wife Lizzie visited Driftwood from Austin, Nannie and her friends enthusiastically inquired into the kind of dresses the Austin girls wore.⁷⁸ Nannie also scrutinized the latest styles in the newspaper while shopping in Dripping Springs.⁷⁹ After working on a white waist with a troublesome yoke, Nannie commented, “ugly too, but have to be in style you know.”⁸⁰

Although fashionable, the clothes always remained homemade. Nannie tried on fine tailor made dresses while in Austin but admitted she “just pretended” she could afford them.⁸¹ When Nannie mentioned buying a new dress, she still had to make it. She only bought the material.⁸² The sewing machine was one of the few labor saving devices Driftwood families purchased for women.⁸³ Nevertheless, Nannie was proud of her clothes. Cloth itself was expensive and displaying it in fashionable clothing was still a sign of wealth. Nannie was “well pleased” with a green dress she made and trimmed in white. She further wrote, “I ought to be pleased with it” since the materials for the dress

⁷⁷Ibid., 9 February 1899.

⁷⁸Ibid., 12 August 1895.

⁷⁹Ibid., 19 March 1895. Several short-lived papers were published in Buda and Kyle before the permanent *Kyle News* was started in 1903.

⁸⁰Ibid., 1 April 1899; 2 April 1904.

⁸¹Ibid., 26 October 1903.

⁸²Ibid., 22 March 1903.

⁸³The Martins owned a cultivator to reduce the labor for the men. Ibid., 7 May 1897.

cost her \$7.25.⁸⁴ Nannie always noted the number of ruffles and tucks, the color, style, and trim of the clothes she made; she used adjectives such as nice, pretty, beautiful, or even wonderful to describe them.⁸⁵ With her clothing, Nannie showed off her skill as well as her wealth.

Nannie purchased all the accessories that complemented her homemade clothing during her weekend trips to town. She shopped in either Dripping Springs, Kyle, Buda or San Marcos about twice a month. While Nannie ordered a few items from catalogs including several hats, a cape, and a skirt, she worried about whether or not she would like the item when it arrived. She preferred picking out her accessories from the store.⁸⁶

An account from 1890 for Nannie's grandfather, Thomas Martin, included calico, a corset, velvet, a parasol, ribbon, a suit, a hat, shirts, ties, thread, illusion (transparent tulle usually made of silk), buttons, a handkerchief, a coat, shoes, pants, and boots valued at a total of \$63.25.⁸⁷ Almost one-third of his purchases for the year were for his family's attire. Martin's account suggested that while the family purchased some accessories for the women, almost all ready-made clothing purchases were for the men. Nonetheless,

⁸⁴Ibid., 6 November 1903.

⁸⁵Ibid., 18 March 1897; 23 April 1902.

⁸⁶Ibid., 19 April 1899; 23 March 1901; 19 September, 2 October 1902; 21 April 1903

⁸⁷Copy of account, Thomas Martin. Harding Papers. The above list represents a sample of the purchases. It is difficult to read all the listings. Thomas Martin's account added up to \$206.26 in 1890. He paid off the balance of \$16.86 on 24 October 1890. The account also notes that Thomas Martin spent a total of \$34.00 on bagging (material for bags for the cotton pickers) in late August and early September. Other purchases are such staples as sugar, kerosene oil, coffee, flour, and salt.

Nannie cherished her little luxuries. One time Nannie's father bought her a pair of new slippers in Kyle, and Nannie boasted "now won't I cut shins and prance every way."⁸⁸ Nannie also gloated over the hat her father bought for her in Austin which came all the way from Chicago.⁸⁹ When money was scarce, Nannie bought trim, ribbons, and buttons to help her remake old dresses into new styles.⁹⁰ "Remodeling is something I dislike very much, too, I'd much rather make a new."⁹¹ Regardless, she could always afford to remain current with the fashion trends by changing trim, collars, yokes, and sleeves. When Nannie went to church each weekend, she wanted to look stylish and prosperous.

Driftwood's middle-class aspirations combined the paradox of young ladies who sang and played the family's expensive piano in stylish attire, but also picked cotton and labored over the wash tub in worn, shapeless mother hubbards. The young women had to be skillful in order to keep up their appearances as ladies rather than farm maids in front of company, especially the young gentleman. Nannie felt humiliated when callers came before she primped. John Dickie and Jessie Gilmore sent Nannie running when they caught her with her wrapper on. She said she never had so much trouble putting on a dress.⁹² Nannie had to act quickly when a young man came to call unannounced. When Charles Christal visited unexpectedly, Nannie had on an old, holey mother hubbard. She

⁸⁸Dorroh diary, 11 June 1895.

⁸⁹Ibid., 9 October 1900.

⁹⁰Ibid., 17 September 1897; 11 February, 4 October 1899; 12, 15 March 1900.

⁹¹Ibid., 7 October 1902.

⁹²Ibid., 28 February 1897.

grabbed an apron to cover the holes, but the apron left one exposed. She kept her hand over the hole the entire visit. "Guess he thought I had heart disease--what a pickle."⁹³ When Jim Eckols called and Nannie was in her jumper, she nonchalantly stood behind a cow to talk to him.⁹⁴ The young men played the dual roles of gentlemen and farm hands as well. Nannie noted she could no longer tease Ben Young about his white jumper after he said mother hubbards were pretty, and she chatted with Jim Eckols even though he wore a shirtwaist without a jacket.⁹⁵ But for the most part, Nannie wanted to follow a more strict decorum.

The outward appearance of the Dorroh home was as important to Nannie as her own personal appearance. Nannie wanted a beautiful home in which to receive guests when the Dorrohs hosted entertainments or had callers. Nannie admired Mrs. Harris' new house and furniture, and she described her Aunt Lucy's new home as grand. She wrote that she was "almost as proud of it as if it were mine."⁹⁶ Nannie cared about the appearance of her parents' wood-frame, two-story farmhouse. She boasted, "how proud we are of our new roof" when the Dorrohs made the improvement in 1900. Nannie's father sold a lot he owned in South Carolina to pay for the expense.⁹⁷ A nice home was

⁹³Ibid., 31 August 1899.

⁹⁴Ibid., 5 October 1900.

⁹⁵Ibid., 26 March 1895; 7 August 1902.

⁹⁶Ibid., 25 December 1900, 16 November 1901.

⁹⁷Ibid., 3, 4 September 1900. Ross Dorroh, D.L. Dorroh's twenty-nine-year-old nephew, sold the property and mailed the check for \$60.00 to Nannie's father. Johnston, *Pioneers*, 398.

so important to Nannie that she offered up both her labor and her hard earned school money to contribute. One summer, Nannie took the initiative to renovate the Dorroh's front room by adding a ceiling over the bare beams. Her uncle, Newt Martin, and Albert Odom helped her. Nannie wrote, "you have no idea what a carpenter I am, can just saw almost as good as a man." After nailing the strips, Nannie painted the room a stylish, Victorian pale green bordered with red. The next day she completed her regular morning work and then gave the front room one more coat of paint. After she finished painting part of the gallery (porch) and moving the furniture back into the front room, she claimed never to have done so much work in one day. Finally, she arranged all the pictures and "everything else" in the room. She complained that the job was "no fun" and emptied her purse entirely, but she also expressed her pride for having a stylish home in which to receive callers.⁹⁸ Three years later Nannie's parents had moved to Leander and purchased a small house. After they hired carpenters to add on a new room, Nannie said she was "too proud of it to even stir about."⁹⁹ Nannie contributed to furnishing the new room by restoring a desk she bought from a neighbor the previous year and also buying furniture in Austin to accompany her mother's new couch.¹⁰⁰ Nannie viewed her parents' house as a reflection of herself just as her clothes were. She wanted the house where she received her guests to look neat, pretty, and stylish.

Nannie sought an ever increasing standard of living and competed with her

⁹⁸Dorroh diary, 12, 14, 16, 17, 18 July 1900.

⁹⁹Ibid., 21, 28 November, 6 December 1903.

¹⁰⁰Ibid., 22 June, 12 December 1903; 24 January 1904.

neighbors for material goods. When Nannie's father bought a new carriage, Nannie wrote, "of course we're proud, why shouldn't we be?"¹⁰¹ Nannie always wanted more than she had, wishing she could hire someone to do her difficult work and shunning those who had less. While ironing Nannie imagined, "how fine to be able to hire such as that."¹⁰² After moving to Williamson County, Nannie's father had greater trouble acquiring labor. First of all, he could no longer rely on the children of his neighbors as he had in Driftwood. Second of all, Williamson County had the highest yields of cotton in Texas making competition for laborers fierce.¹⁰³ Having trouble retaining single men, Nannie's father hired a whole migrant family to pick cotton for him. The family camped out in the Dorroh's backyard. One cold and rainy night, Nannie glanced out her window at the tent which barely protected the migrant workers from the weather. She figured that the rain was "bad on our campers" but consoled her guilt by assuming "they're used to it tho [sic]."¹⁰⁴ Her fleeting sympathy for the family was not so much a consideration of offering the workers shelter from the rain, but a realization that she never wanted to find herself in a similar situation.

Nannie's desire for material comfort guided the decisions she made as a young

¹⁰¹Ibid., 27 January 1901.

¹⁰²Ibid., 14 June 1901.

¹⁰³Ibid., 21, 30 September 1903. Nannie wrote, "One cotton picker, how glad to see him come...wish 'twas four instead of one." A week later she wrote, "so far two hands is all we've gotten...They were talking of raising wages at noon." On October tenth, Nannie recorded that their hands left, they hired the family on October twelfth. Allen, *Labor of Women*, 18-19.

¹⁰⁴Dorroh diary, 12, 15 October 1903.

woman. At times, Nannie seemed to wish she was a man because her young male friends had more opportunities before them. When Stuart Stone and Jim Black went to Nashville for medical school, Nannie wrote

We were talking about boys' chances this morn,
About them taking advantage of it and going on.
And about girls having no chance at all.
Fannie says I'm *mad because I'm not a boy--*
There are so many useful professions for them it seems.
And nothing for an old girl but to *teach or housekeep*.¹⁰⁵

Beginning in the early 1890s, many of the young men in Driftwood began leaving the area to find work ranching in west Texas or to acquire land in Indian Territory.¹⁰⁶ While beautiful, northern Hays County lacked the fertile soil for a second generation of farmers. Nannie's uncle, Mack Martin, left Driftwood in 1889 for Indian Territory. Eight years later he came home and brought his Alabama bride for his family to meet. The couple stayed three weeks then returned to Indian Territory to live. In September of 1894 Nannie mentioned that Lem Howard had been in Oklahoma a year that day.¹⁰⁷ Less than a month later Bob, Rogers, and Albert Odom, Nannie's "main boys," left for Wharton County to obtain work.¹⁰⁸ Nannie complained that boys were scarce in Driftwood. Ernest Odom

¹⁰⁵Ibid., 26 August 1899.

¹⁰⁶Ibid., 23, 25, 30 September, 1 October 1894; 3 January, 1 March, 27 August 1897; 14 April 1901. *Driftwood Dots*, 12 November 1901, inserted in Dorroh diary. *Driftwood Dots*, 26 August 1901, inserted in Dorroh diary.

¹⁰⁷Ibid., 9 September 1894.

¹⁰⁸Ibid., 2 October 1894.

wrote Nannie's brother Larrie about the claim he secured in Oklahoma.¹⁰⁹ The following summer, Larrie left to seek his fortune. Because the productivity of the Dorroh farm had declined, there was nothing to encourage him to stay in Driftwood.¹¹⁰ Larrie returned home, however, after his parents moved to Williamson County. In 1902, the boys starting leaving in droves for Beaumont, Texas to pump oil at Spindletop.¹¹¹ Nannie wrote, "Everyone who can go to Beaumont is there," and she compared the depletion of men to war times.¹¹²

At the turn of the century, unmarried women also had opportunities to leave the farm and acquire work or obtain an education, and several of Nannie's friends took advantage of the increasing options open to women.¹¹³ For example, Nannie's aunt Phoebe Martin had her own millinery store in Kyle; a newspaper clipping announced that Katie Wilhelm of Driftwood had traveled to St. Louis, Missouri in the interest of a prominent Austin millinery house; Nannie's younger sister Ella went with their aunt, Lillie Martin, to spend the summer working in an Austin boarding house; Nannie's cousin Mary Garison and her aunt Hattie Martin went to San Marcos to take education courses; and two of Nannie's acquaintances from Leander took a business course in Tyler,

¹⁰⁹Ibid., 18 September 1901.

¹¹⁰Ibid., 8 July 1902.

¹¹¹Ibid., 10 January, 20 October 1902.

¹¹²Ibid., 15 October 1902.

¹¹³Anne Firor Scott, *The Southern Lady: From Pedestal to Politics 1830-1930* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1970), 214.

Texas.¹¹⁴ Nannie appeared interested in the adventures of her friends. When she received a circular in the mail from Austin Business College, she wrote, “How I’d like to be among their numbers, have half a notion to be this summer. I’m sure I’d just like shorthand fine.”¹¹⁵ The next year while visiting friends in San Marcos, Nannie attended a lecture at a business college. Once again she pondered the opportunity, “How I’d like to attend something of the kind,” but Nannie refrained from acting spontaneously.¹¹⁶

Nannie wanted to remain a part of her social network in Driftwood. In fact, when Nannie saw her male friends leave, she did not necessarily want to go to, rather she wanted them to stay. “A boy leaving is the saddest thing I know. They’re exposed to so many temptations, so apt to be led away.”¹¹⁷ Because she wanted to remain close to her rural community, Nannie’s choices as a woman became much more limited. At the end of the nineteenth century rural magazines like the *Nebraska Farmer* acknowledged the fact that unmarried women sought more financial independence from their families. One article offered such worthless suggestions to rural women as keeping pets for vacationing neighbors.¹¹⁸ To stay in Driftwood, Nannie knew her realistic choices were either

¹¹⁴Dorroh diary, 15 April 1897; 24 August 1901. *Driftwood Dots*, inserted in Dorroh diary, 11 February 1904. Ella liked to cook and that may have been what she planned to do. Whatever her tasks, she thought the work was too hard (physically) and returned home early. She taught school in the fall.

¹¹⁵*Ibid.*, 19 March 1901.

¹¹⁶*Ibid.*, 7, 9 May 1902.

¹¹⁷*Ibid.*, 14 April 1901.

¹¹⁸Nellie Hawks, “How Women May Make Money,” *Nebraska Farmer* 20 (1896): 312.

teaching or marriage.

Although marriage became Nannie's primary goal, she refused to lower her standards when choosing a husband. Since a woman's ambitions were tied to men, Nannie would play her hand well. Her materialism prompted her patience. When leaving her parents home, she opposed even a temporary decline in standard of living. She wanted her husband to own a house and have the means to support a family before marriage.¹¹⁹ Also, Nannie believed a financially established husband would protect her from the degradation of doing masculine work.¹²⁰ When Nannie's father went to Austin for business, Nannie had to be "the man" and make two fires. She charged, "I can do such when duty demands, But I'm not going to do it for *my man*."¹²¹ Another time her father left, Nannie made clear, "someone has to take the place of a boy...Never'll I do such for anyone but Papa, understand."¹²² Nannie also thought a good husband would reduce her female burdens by not treating her like a servant. While boarding with the Gunns, she was impressed that James Gunn often made breakfast himself rather than calling on his wife to get up early and cook for him. "First thing I heard Mr. G. told Addie to stay in bed and he'd get breakfast. Whew! I'm going to get a fellow like that--

¹¹⁹Dorroh diary, 10 February 1904.

¹²⁰Allen, *Labor of Women*, 142; Dolores Janiewski, "Sisters Under Their Skins: Southern Working Women, 1880-1950," in *Sex, Race, and the Role of Women in the South* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1983), 15.

¹²¹Dorroh diary, 3 November 1900.

¹²²*Ibid.*, 22 August 1902.

you 'd better reckon."¹²³ Furthermore, Nannie endeavored to find a husband who could do more than just maintain her current standard of living. She wanted someone who would increase her social status by decreasing her physical labor. On wash day Nannie and her sisters "decided we wouldn't have a man...who wouldn't hire washing done" because a true lady would never spend all morning scrubbing over the wash tub.¹²⁴

In addition to material comfort, Nannie sought a husband who shared her evangelical moral code. While she was not a spiritual person, she was concerned with proper moral behavior. When her Sunday school class discussed the topic "Where with all can a young man cleanse his ways," Nannie hoped the young men would take the "good advise."¹²⁵ Nannie and her community believed temperance was of utmost importance. She condemned a Daisy Noble for keeping company with the "drinking, rowdy set" in Leander. "The idea of going with a boy who drinks--even when drunk...I never heard of such terrible boys--I wouldn't be guilty of associating with them."¹²⁶ For Nannie, a man could not be both intemperate and moral.

Because Nannie believed the most important decision any woman would make was the decision to marry, she disapproved of immature brides and bride grooms.¹²⁷ At age twenty, Nannie discussed "young married people managing so bad" with her

¹²³Ibid., 12 March 1902.

¹²⁴Ibid., 10 April 1902.

¹²⁵Ibid., 15 September 1901.

¹²⁶Ibid., 23 march 1904.

¹²⁷Ibid., 15 August 1897.

friends.¹²⁸ She expressed her disgust at the marriage of two young Driftwood couples. “The boys don’t own anything, much less a place...all just kids, be happy they can never.”¹²⁹ When her eighteen-year-old sister, Ethyl, married, twenty-six-year-old Nannie wrote, “the idea of her keeping house--such a child.” Nannie worried because Ethyl had never been away from home for any substantial length of time. Nevertheless, she thought “they may do all right” because Ethyl’s husband, Otis, at least had their home ready in Driftwood.¹³⁰ Later that year Nannie wrote, “I try to hurrah these children for marrying so young. Pshaw! Tho, such a thing can’t be done.”¹³¹

Nannie believed young couples lacked the emotional maturity to handle the tragedies of life. Nannie inserted a clipping in her diary about a divorce case between a teenage husband and wife. The editorialist asserted that a maid of fifteen or sixteen was not mature enough to marry. The judge refused to grant the divorce stating that the case was just a quarrel between children.¹³² Every year Nannie’s diary reported the deaths of friends and acquaintances who were only in their twenties. Nannie wondered how those who had barely reached majority themselves could raise children alone. Twenty-five-year-old Nannie pitied her younger friend, Johnnie Morris, who was already widowed

¹²⁸Ibid., 16 July 1897.

¹²⁹Ibid., 15 August 1897.

¹³⁰Ibid., 12 April 1903.

¹³¹Ibid., 8, 9, 19, 31 August 1903.

¹³²Ibid., 13 February 1903.

with young children.¹³³ When Edgar Howard and Annie Eckols eloped in their early twenties, they surprised their social circle in Driftwood.¹³⁴ Four years later Edgar died suddenly. Nannie wrote, “Poor Annie! Left with two orphans.”¹³⁵ To make matters worse, Nannie believed Annie should never have married in the first place because of her poor health. Now she was a single mother with few choices other than becoming dependent on kin or taking the risk of hastily remarrying. After learning of Annie’s situation, Nannie condemned the social pressure to marry. “Pshaw! Tho some think you can’t live single and be happy.”¹³⁶

Nannie especially criticized young women who married widowers with children close to their own ages.¹³⁷ “I think young people had better quit marrying widows, widowers, and children have begun--Yes, it’s enough to disgust everyone.”¹³⁸ When Nannie’s nineteen-year-old friend Beatrice Jacques married a widower with three children, Nannie wrote “surely she does not realize what she has done” in undertaking so much responsibility.¹³⁹ After Nannie received the announcement that Beatrice had a baby girl, she wrote, “Poor girl! Such a responsibility on her. Already had three stepchildren-

¹³³Ibid., 1 February 1902.

¹³⁴Ibid., 19, 22, 23 September 1899.

¹³⁵Ibid., 31 December 1903.

¹³⁶Ibid., 15 August 1903.

¹³⁷Ibid., 28 November 1897. 31 January 1901.

¹³⁸Ibid., 19 November 1895.

¹³⁹Ibid., 29 July 1902.

-what'll she do."¹⁴⁰ Nannie also heard that Pearle Cannon married a widower with kids as old as she. Nannie wrote, "Poor girl's had a hard time and now how much worse 'twill be."¹⁴¹ Marrying widowers and widows also led to the problem of complex families. Nannie joked, "I'm almost *sore* tonight, talking about her '*half-sisters' husband's children*--never did I get it right."¹⁴² The Martin family was an example. Nannie had eight half aunts and uncles relatively close to her own age, and after her grandfather's death, a rift developed over the division of his estate between the children of his first wife and the children of his widow that tore apart the family.¹⁴³

To avoid accepting such an enormous amount of responsibility literally overnight, Nannie resolved that she would never settle for a widower with children. In 1898 when Nannie's father brought home an old widower and a political candidate, twenty-one-year-old Nannie complained that one came for the judge's office and "the other for *matrimony* I fear."¹⁴⁴ Three years later at age twenty-four Nannie remained resolutely disinterested in widowers. After she received an invitation to visit "the widower" in Gatlin, she wondered if she could get away with refusing him one more time.¹⁴⁵ Like her grandfather, a widower needed to remarry in order to have someone to take care of his

¹⁴⁰Ibid., 21 May 1903.

¹⁴¹Ibid., 24 November 1902.

¹⁴²Ibid., 2 February 1897.

¹⁴³Ibid., 2, 3 August 1902.

¹⁴⁴Ibid., 20 August 1898.

¹⁴⁵Ibid., 21 January 1901.

house and his children. In 1901 *The Spinster Book* lightheartedly examined widowers' propensity to pursue young brides, and young women's disposition to refuse them. With greater need and greater confidence, widowers proposed more abruptly and more often than young, single men.¹⁴⁶ Nannie dreaded being around widowers because she wanted to avoid an awkward situation.

Even without the complications associated with marrying a widower, Nannie knew marriage and motherhood would end much of her freedom. After Lucy Black Martin gave birth to first child at age twenty-three, Nannie wrote, "her girlhood frolics are forever past."¹⁴⁷ At age twenty-four Nannie ironed for her twenty-seven-year-old sister Kate and wondered how Kate kept up with four children ranging from eight to under a year old.¹⁴⁸ Nannie visited her twenty-four-year-old friend, Ida Harris Gunn, who had been married five years and had two children. After the visit Nannie said she pitied Ida because she "just sits at home days and months." She wrote, "married life may be alright, but we'll continue a single one."¹⁴⁹ Nannie sympathized with her friends who married because those young women no longer fit into a social group. As wives, they could not feasibly spend their afternoons cavorting with their single friends, especially with a baby in tow. But neither did they belong with the older matrons who, in Driftwood at

¹⁴⁶Reed, *Spinster Book*, 187-190.

¹⁴⁷Dorroh diary, 16 October 1900.

¹⁴⁸Ibid., 13 September 1901. 18 September 1902

¹⁴⁹Ibid., 22 September 1900; 1900 census.

least, were mainly their friends' mothers.¹⁵⁰ For the most part, Nannie was in no hurry to give up attending lyceums, entertainments, and participating in clubs. If not marriage itself, she knew motherhood would prevent her from enjoying late nights with her friends.

At the same time, Nannie felt somewhat betrayed by her friends who married before her. In May of 1897, Nannie hoped no one else from her group would marry.¹⁵¹ The next day she heard the news of her friend Millie McClintock's impending wedding. She wrote "God forbid" and cried all night.¹⁵² When Nannie called on Lucy Martin about six months after her wedding, Nannie claimed the visit was awkward because her marriage seemed to put a barrier between them. She seldom saw Lucy anymore.¹⁵³ In 1901 Nannie spent the day with her friend, Lillie Eckols. Later she wrote that she was still grieving because Lillie "married and left me," even though the wedding had occurred seven years earlier.¹⁵⁴ When Nannie's cousin, Drue Garison, announced her wedding in 1903, Nannie sighed, "after married, they're never the same."¹⁵⁵

Nannie had several reasons to feel melancholy when a friend or family member married. Primarily, she felt the loss of a confidant. After a visit from Ida Gunn, Nannie

¹⁵⁰Lystra, *Searching the Heart*, 272.

¹⁵¹Dorroh diary, 31 May 1897.

¹⁵²Ibid., 1 June 1897

¹⁵³Ibid., 22 August 1900.

¹⁵⁴Ibid., 20 September 1901.

¹⁵⁵Ibid., 8 September 1903.

lamented, “when she was single, we were together so much of the time.”¹⁵⁶ Also, married sisters and brothers meant additional work for the remaining family members. Nannie complained that there “used to be four grown girls at home, and now I must shoulder all alone.”¹⁵⁷ With so many married sisters, she decided her youngest brother George would have to become a girl. Last of all, each additional wedding reminded Nannie that she was among a shrinking pool of unmarried twenty-somethings. Nannie’s reaction was not due to envy or desperation, but it seemed more a product of disappointment that the young people around her lacked the common sense she had to wait until the optimum time to marry. She pondered, “No longer sweethearts but now wed. Such a solemn occasion to me, And disregarded by so many it seems.”¹⁵⁸

Yet, while Nannie resisted the social pressure to marry, she still often reacted to it. Her own attitude towards spinsters seemed scornful. “Miss _____ is a sure enough ‘old maid,’ just imagine *me* like that in future days.”¹⁵⁹ Nannie believed that a shameful stigma was associated with spinsterhood. Even before her nineteenth birthday Nannie wrote, “Oh! I will soon begin to feel ‘Old Maily’ I fear, For Kate has another *boy* to call me ‘aunty.’”¹⁶⁰ As early as 1897, the boys started teasing Hattie Martin, Lucy Black,

¹⁵⁶Ibid., 23 September 1897.

¹⁵⁷Ibid., 8 May 1903.

¹⁵⁸Ibid., 20 December 1903.

¹⁵⁹Ibid., 14 February 1899; 9 October 1901.

¹⁶⁰Ibid., 3 September 1895.

Mary Garison, and Nannie about being old maids.¹⁶¹ Nannie, Hattie, and Mary were only twenty-one, and Lucy was only twenty. All were younger than the median age at which women married at the turn of the century.¹⁶² In fact, their birth cohort waited longer to marry than any other generation in American history.¹⁶³ Nonetheless, when Nannie's uncle Mack Martin brought home his new bride in 1897, he asked his female relatives, "Are you all going to be old maids?" Nannie was not amused, "He needn't boast, he couldn't talk that way but a few days."¹⁶⁴ Nannie seemed self-conscious about being perceived as a spinster. For example, in 1900 she and Minnie Black refused to be "useful old maids" at Tom and Lucy Martin's Valentine's Day party.¹⁶⁵ Likewise, Nannie feared the old maid schoolteacher stereotype when she saw her former pupils marry before her. After one wedding she wrote, "I'll declare! Does look like their teacher'd find a gent somewhere."¹⁶⁶

On the surface many of Nannie's comments made her appear somewhat desperate

¹⁶¹Ibid., 1 January 1897.

¹⁶²Peter Uhlenberg, "Cohort Variations in Family Life Cycle Experiences of U. S. Family," *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 26 (1974): 287. Uhlenberg determined the median age at marriage for Nannie's birth cohort was twenty-two.

¹⁶³Kathleen Underwood, "The Pace of Their Own Lives: Teacher Training and the Life Course of Western Women," *Pacific Historical Review* (Fall 1986): 524; Mattie Lloyd Wooten, "The Marital Condition of the Population of Texas: 1890-1930," *Southwestern Social Science Quarterly* 16 (1935): 74; Lystra, *Searching the Heart*, 249.

¹⁶⁴Dorroh diary, 21 May 1897.

¹⁶⁵Ibid., 14, 16, 23 February 1900.

¹⁶⁶Ibid., 26 February 1899; 2 June 1902.

to marry, but Nannie would have rather remained a spinster than found herself in an unhappy marriage. She agreed with the contemporary sources of the time that condemned women's economic dependence on their husbands and was therefore horrified by the story of a Mr. Teague who sold all of his wife's cattle to pay his debts.¹⁶⁷

What ought to be done with him, I don't know.
A drunkard and gambler--oh deliver me from such a life.
I prefer being an old maid and teaching.¹⁶⁸

He could legally do so, but because Nannie accumulated property of her own through teaching, she believed his actions were immoral. Nannie also was appalled after learning that Brother Graham of Dripping Springs had been brutally beating his wife. She wrote, 'How horrible! From all appearances he's a noble man.'¹⁶⁹ Nannie also witnessed other examples of deleterious consequences from a poor decision to marry and so resolved to remain single until she found a good match.

Nannie had plenty of opportunities to marry if she had wished to do so. The most prominent example was Dibb Jones who began courting Nannie in 1901. Rumors quickly circulated throughout the community that Dibb Jones loved Nannie Dorroh and wanted their "cattle to run together." Nannie seemed interested in the beginning.

Then soon after Dibb came.
And lo & behold! I got to go with him to preaching,
Says he thinks I better quit teaching.
And asked if I could cook, wonder what next,

¹⁶⁷Hawks, "How Women May Make Money," 312; Lerner, *Female Experience*, 250; Anne Firor Scott, *The Southern Lady*, 215; Reed, *Spinster Book*, 216.

¹⁶⁸Dorroh diary, 6 December 1901.

¹⁶⁹Ibid., 25 October 1900.

Will just wait patiently for the rest.¹⁷⁰

Since Dibb did not live in northern Hays County, he courted Nannie during occasional weekend visits and through the mail. Nannie's mother teased her mercilessly about her first letter from Dibb because Nannie was so "dumbfounded and shocked" she had to go for the camphor.¹⁷¹ In the second letter, Nannie seemed disappointed that Dibb did not mention his greatest single attraction, his rubber tire carriage.¹⁷² By the third letter, Nannie was more straightforward about her true feelings, "Poor boy I do actually feel sorry for him, but it is possible that he'll never take a hint."¹⁷³ In 1903 Dibb called on her in Leander but left early the next morning. Nannie wrote, "Surely, surely that's my last now forever more, He's a nice old boy, industrious and all such--and I like him all right--*but...*"¹⁷⁴ But Nannie had already shifted her affection to Albert Odom.

Between 1894 and 1904 Albert Odom slowly but steadily proved that he was everything Nannie wanted in a husband. While he had been a constant, reliable, and thoughtful beau for at least ten years, Nannie's views of Albert changed into romantic love after he drove her thirty miles in rain and sleet back to work in Duggerville on New Year's Eve in 1902. Albert had sacrificed participation in the last night of holiday festivities in order to take her back. Nannie seemed deeply moved, "all this terrible

¹⁷⁰Ibid., 12 May 1901.

¹⁷¹Ibid., 11 September 1901.

¹⁷²Ibid., 14 December 1901.

¹⁷³Ibid., 12 September 1902.

¹⁷⁴Ibid., 6 July 1903.

weather for me.”¹⁷⁵ Twenty days later, she received a letter from Albert and called it “the one I wanted.”¹⁷⁶ In July of 1903, Nannie claimed she had declined going anywhere with a young man for four months and said Albert had not called on another girl since she left in January.¹⁷⁷ Albert had always shared Nannie’s moral code and had become a steward in the Driftwood Methodist Church in 1902.¹⁷⁸ Nannie applauded Albert for giving up chewing tobacco, truly a rare occurrence.¹⁷⁹ After a large Prohibition rally in Leander, Mrs. Bitticks teased Nannie and her friend Lucinda that their fellows were Antis. Nannie quickly retorted “but they’re not, we’d quit them too quick if they were so.”¹⁸⁰ Nannie had no interest in reforming a man after marriage; she wanted a good husband from the start. Most importantly, Albert had purchased the land where the Driftwood Liberty Hill schoolhouse had been before it burnt to the ground. By 1904, he had it all in cultivation. Nannie wrote, “shouldn’t wonder if Albert’s ploughing there today.”¹⁸¹ Albert was three

¹⁷⁵Ibid., 31 December 1902.

¹⁷⁶Ibid., 31 December 1902; 20 January 1903.

¹⁷⁷Ibid., 10 July 1903.

¹⁷⁸Ibid., 29 March 1902.

¹⁷⁹Ibid., 10 August 1902; Ellen K. Rothman, *Hands and Hearts: A History of Courtship in America* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1984), 186. Lasch argued that young women in the 1890s believed men were impure unlike women, but that women were attracted to the idea of reforming men through marriage. He quoted the diary of Helen Swett in 1892, “The man I marry must need me...my influence must be good for him.” Nannie would have agreed with the growing number of young women that the impurity of men was all the more reason not to marry. Reed, *Spinster Book*, 34. “Love sometimes reforms a man, but marriage does not.”

¹⁸⁰Dorroh diary, 16 July 1903.

¹⁸¹Ibid., 11 February 1904.

years younger than Nannie, but she appeared untroubled by the age difference. At twenty-eight years old, Nannie was finally ready to write, "I might have searched the country out and out, but a more deserving young man couldn't been found."¹⁸²

Nannie waited ten years after reaching an acceptable age to marry before she was ready to make the commitment. Her decision was typical for her generation. What factors contributed to their desire to wait? Nannie's ambitions largely defined her decisions and actions. Historian Jean E. Friedman argued that "Southern rural women worked to improve the family property in order that they might move not toward independence but toward dependence as a leisured class."¹⁸³ This statement defined Nannie's ambition. Her willingness to wait was not necessarily a sign of an independent spirit, but of a woman who wanted social status, comfort, and serenity. Race provided Nannie with the automatic social status that was so important to her. Unfortunately, Nannie's racism provided for her the same emotion as wearing a brand new outfit on Sunday--she felt more like a lady and less like a farm maid.

While her ambition to improve her material comfort gave her the patience to wait for a good chance to marry, Nannie's parents expected her to earn an income in the meantime. With seven girls, Nannie's father had more daughters than the domestic workload necessitated, and his daughters made poor cotton pickers.¹⁸⁴ Nannie

¹⁸²Ibid., 21 April 1904.

¹⁸³Jean E. Friedman, *The Enclosed Garden*, 26.

¹⁸⁴Allen, *Labor of Women*, 83. Allen claimed it was rare to find even two women sharing the domestic load.

acknowledged that her father had “more *girls* than *money*.”¹⁸⁵ If they chose not to marry early, they had to find some means to help support themselves. Unfortunately, as women, they had few alternatives, and Nannie further reduced her options by choosing to stay near home. Teaching, however, allowed Nannie to remain near Driftwood, maintain her standard of living and social status, and patiently search for a husband.

¹⁸⁵Dorroh diary, 28 August 1901.

CHAPTER IV

THE RURAL TEACHER AND THE RURAL SCHOOL

“Why on earth do we want to be teachers?”¹ After a hard day at school, Nannie routinely asked the question in her diary, and she never failed to suffer a severe headache the day before the outset of a new school term. “Uneasy lie the heads of all who rule; the most so is his whose kingdom is the school.” Nannie cut this verse from a newspaper and placed it in her diary. While she agreed, she wrote that the author should add the word country. “No, no position’s so trying as the country teachers. Then, there’s no sympathy either.”² Each year Nannie threatened never to return to the profession again. So if as late as 1920 less than 10 percent of teachers had more than four years of experience, why did Nannie Dorroh continue to teach for nine years?³ For the most part, despite the deplorable conditions, teaching allowed Nannie to postpone marriage until she found a man who met all of her high standards. She also liked the challenge. “Sometimes I think I’ll never again teach, But when others go at it, that arouses me.” Regardless of her motives, though, Nannie’s diary provides a rich source of history about the actual conditions of the Texas one-room rural school at the turn of the century.

In the fall of 1895 Nannie began her teaching career at age eighteen having

¹Dorroh diary, 23 January 1903.

²Ibid.

³Annie Webb Blanton, *Handbook of Information as to Education in Texas, 1918-1922*. The Department of Education, Bulletin 157, Austin, Texas, January 1923, 456.

completed only five months of high school.⁴ She accepted a position co-teaching with her cousin, Mary Garison, at the Liberty Hill School in Driftwood which they had attended as children.⁵ From 1896 to 1898, Nannie spent two years teaching the primary grades at the three-room Dripping Springs School where she had briefly attended high school in 1894 and 1895.⁶ Since Dripping Springs was located about eight miles north of Driftwood, Nannie boarded with a family in town. For the 1898-1899 school term Nannie accepted an offer to teach at the Bluff Springs School, located only a mile south of her home in Driftwood.⁷ From 1899-1901, Nannie taught two terms at the Pound's Chapel School in Gatlin, about five miles west of Driftwood. She boarded with Lucy Black's family. For the 1901-1902 school term, Nannie taught the Rock Springs School in Fitzhugh, located about six miles north of Dripping Springs.⁸ Although D. L. Dorroh's

⁴Nannie's nineteenth birthday was 21 October 1895.

⁵Dudley R. Dobie, *A Brief History of Hays County and San Marcos, Texas* (San Marcos: privately printed, 1948), 60; Stoval, *Clear Springs*, 335. Liberty Hill was the original settlement by Onion Creek at present day Driftwood. In 1885 when the community became large enough to add a post office, the leaders of the community changed the name to Driftwood since another community in Williamson County, northeast of Austin, was called Liberty Hill.

⁶Dorroh diary, 2 February, 24 May, 2, 19 July, 16 September 1897. Stoval, *Clear Springs*, 435-437, 478; handwritten Hays County Superintendent Records, 1893-1897. Professor D. W. Burkett (principal), Nannie Dorroh and Alpha Caperton taught for the 1896-1897 school year, and Oscar Stubbs (principal), Nannie Dorroh, and Annie Gilmore taught for the 1897-1898 school year.

⁷Dorroh diary, 3, 29 October 1898.

⁸Johnston, *Pioneers*, 277. Henry Dorroh was D.L. Dorroh's second cousin. Their great-grandparents, James Dorroh and Jane Brown, immigrated from Ireland to South Carolina prior to 1762 and were granted three hundred fifty acres of land (233).

second cousin lived in Fitzhugh, Nannie boarded with another family who lived right next door to the school. The next year Mary Garrison obtained an interview for Nannie in Duggerville where her uncle John Garrison preached on his circuit. Mary planned to teach ten miles from Duggerville in Carl.⁹ While teaching at the Dugger School, Nannie boarded thirty miles from Driftwood in neighboring Travis County.¹⁰ In 1903-1904, Nannie spent her final year teaching the primary grades at the three-room Leander School. In 1902 the Dorrohs had moved to Williamson County about a mile and a half south of Leander.¹¹ The school asked her to return the following year, but Nannie married and eagerly quit teaching for good.¹²

Nannie's teaching career demonstrated the phenomenon of rural teachers changing schools almost annually. Nannie taught in seven different schools during her nine year career. For the 1897-1898 school term, Nannie noted the movement of her friends into each other's former positions: Mose had Lucy's former school, Stuart taught Hattie's, and Jim had her first school.¹³ The high turnover rate created the additional stress of job instability for Nannie and other teachers. Nannie appreciated teaching in the

⁹Dorroh diary, 5, 6, 10 June 1902.

¹⁰Ibid., 2 November 1902.

¹¹Ibid., November 1903.

¹²Ibid., 7 April 1904.

¹³Ibid., 11 January 1898. Mose Cavett was a pupil at Dripping Springs while Nannie taught there. Hattie Martin was Nannie's aunt, although they were the same age. Stuart Stone was an acquaintance of Nannie's. Jim Black was Lucy's brother and a beau of Nannie's.

same school for two years in a row as she did in Dripping Springs and Gatlin. Even in those two schools, however, she did not find out until midsummer whether or not she had again received the position. Noting in July of 1897

The trustees told me when school closed, to count on my same position.
But I didn't know and was tired of this uncertain condition.
Mr. Mc [with whom she boarded] would send me word every chance: "Don't be uneasy about your school,"
But I was getting fretted, wanted to know what I was going to do.
So today they sent word I certainly had my same room,
And now I won't have to bother and worry soon.¹⁴

Typically, Nannie and her friends spent a portion of each summer worrying about their employment status for the following year.

In fact, acquiring a position required so much effort and maneuvering that Nannie and other teachers referred to the process in political terms as "lectioneering." One key problem was the surplus of teachers. Teaching required few qualifications and minimal commitment. Furthermore, since several families with children near the same age moved into northern Hays County concurrently, many of Nannie's friends became teachers at the same time. "Rogers [Odom] told Mary [Garison] & me that '*teachers*' were the commonest things yet, it's true we haven't positions."¹⁵ Nannie herself described Driftwood as "alive with teachers."¹⁶ She named forty-six teachers besides herself who

¹⁴Ibid., 2 July 1897.

¹⁵Ibid., 12 June 1898.

¹⁶Ibid., 23 April 1902.

were from or taught in northern Hays county while she herself still worked.¹⁷ In 1898 Lucy Black depicted the process of outmaneuvering other teachers to gain employment. “Mose [Calvert] is out lectioneering for the D.W. [Driftwood] school as Miss Annie beat him at Bear Creek.” The following day Lucy planned to see about the Liberty Hill School also, but rain forced her to postpone the trip. Lucy visited two of the Driftwood trustees, Mr. Howard and Mr. Crumbley, the next day. One week later the trustees proffered her the school.¹⁸ Mose Calvert offered to help Nannie get his old school, but that effort failed. Perhaps Mose hoped Nannie would give him an advantage at the Driftwood school, not realizing the trustees had already hired Lucy. Jim Black also offered to help Nannie with the Wayside School, but Nannie accepted employment in Bluff Springs the following day. After her success, Nannie informed Hattie about an opportunity at a school which County Superintendent Judge Kone had suggested to her. Hattie followed up, but Nannie made no more mention of the issue.¹⁹ Although teachers often helped one another obtain work, the competition for schools not only created stress for teachers but also strained friendships.

Once rural teachers successfully gained employment, they usually had less than

¹⁷This is a conservative count. I only added those teachers she referred to by name which she connected to northern Hays county. She of course met many other teachers at institutes, normals, while traveling, and when she lived in Caldwell and Williamson counties. While visiting relatives in Mississippi, Nannie noted, “Teachers here are like they are at home, on all sides” (13 May 1899).

¹⁸Black diary, 5, 6, 7, 14 June 1898. The third trustee was most likely Nannie’s father.

¹⁹Dorroh diary, 3, 4, 8 July 1898.

six months to build up a favorable relationship with the local school trustees, a community, group of students, and a place of boarding before moving on for another readjustment period. Nannie complained, "No, a teacher's life isn't what some might say. First one place, then there, then here--new people to contend with every year."²⁰ In many cases, teachers fell victim to the infighting of school trustees. Education historians have documented the occurrence of a school board dismissing a competent teacher in order to hire a relative or friend with a newly acquired certificate. The state could revoke a teacher's license for not honoring a contract, but the school district received no penalty for breaking its end of a legal contract.²¹

With so many kin and close friends qualified to teach, the members of the Driftwood community often disagreed about who should be hired for the Liberty Hill School. To further complicate and add friction to the process, various members of the community randomly invited their favorites to teach whether or not they had the authority to do so.²² Nannie's male relatives frequently served as school trustees.²³ The year

²⁰Ibid., 30 January 1904.

²¹The teacher could go through the expense and hassle of taking legal recourse. In 1899 a local school board in Frio County reelected a Mrs. Woolls to her same position as teacher. Four days later, a new board took office and replaced her. The district court ruled in favor of Mrs. Woolls and required the new board to reinstate her as the lawful teacher. *Town of Pearsall et al. V. Woolls*. Court of Civic Appeals of Texas, 1899. 50 S.W. 959. In Samuel Bertram McCalister, *A Selection of Cases on the Government and Law of the Texas School System* (College Station, Texas: The Educational Publishing Company, 1935), 317-319.

²²Dorroh diary, 4 April 1897; Black diary, 1 June 1898.

²³Ibid., 27 April 1901.

Nannie and Mary taught at Driftwood's Liberty Hill School, Nannie's father had already promised the school to Annie Wilhelm, also of Driftwood. At a J.U.G. club meeting, Annie confronted Mary and Nannie about the snafu. After the "tongue lashing" Nannie charged, "such from a lady--I never heard" but seemed most shaken because Annie criticized her father.²⁴ In 1902, another conflict ensued over the Driftwood school. Nannie expressed relief when the disputants, including her father, finally agreed upon an outsider, Frank Nevins.²⁵ In December of that year the Dorrohs moved to Leander. The next year Albert Odom and Nannie's sister, Kate Hall, both wrote to inform Nannie that she would be offered the Liberty Hill School for the 1903-1904 term, but Nannie considered the previous infighting when she decided to decline the offer.²⁶ "[I] am so afraid it wouldn't be satisfactory with all, so I guess I'll just say no."²⁷ Although Nannie longed to live in Driftwood again, she thought it best to avoid moving back under strained circumstances.

In addition to the conflicts among trustees or residents of a community, a dispute with the family where a teacher boarded might spoil the year. Nannie avoided problems

²⁴Ibid., 13 July 1895. Nannie simply referred to "Miss Annie." More than one Annie lived in the community and was qualified to teach. Nonetheless, Annie Wilhelm had previously taught both Nannie and Mary at the Liberty Hill School and was most intimately connected with the community. On 15 December 1895 Nannie commented that Annie W. was "as friendly as you please today."

²⁵Ibid., 4 July 1902. Frank Nevins boarded with Nannie's aunt, Lucy Dunevant.

²⁶Ibid., 30 March 1903.

²⁷Ibid., 11, 28 May 1903. Albert Odom married Nannie in 1903. Kate Dorroh Hall was Nannie's older sister who remained in Driftwood after the family moved.

of safety and propriety by exclusively boarding with family friends or at least acquaintances, but she still frequently felt homesick because she missed her extensive social network in Driftwood.²⁸ Nevertheless, only while boarding with the McKellar's in Dripping Springs was her situation even remotely unsuitable. The McKellars managed a regular boarding house which welcomed male as well as female boarders.²⁹ One boarder, Dr. Stuart, apparently had a reputation for not only being somewhat eccentric but also being too friendly with the young women in Dripping Springs as well. Nannie thought "twas funny as can be" when Dr. Stuart "sidled along with" two of her female acquaintances at a concert.³⁰ Another time, after mailing a letter which she failed to address, Nannie said she feared that the town would think she was the crazy one, not Dr. Stuart.³¹ Her friend Ben Young teased her by saying that she could lead Dr. Stuart around the house with a string using his bald head as a lantern. Even worse, Dr. Stuart not only lived at the McKellar's, but he and Nannie ended up dining alone together almost every night. Nannie's cousin, Van Clarke, teased her about her regular dining partner. Nannie resigned herself to the situation writing, "when I get me an old man, I'll be used to two anyway."³² While Ben Young continued to tease Nannie about Dr. Stuart over the Christmas holidays, apparently Nannie's mother and father were not as amused about the

²⁸Ibid., 29 January 1901; 3 March, 5 April 1903.

²⁹Ibid., 20 January, 4 March 1897.

³⁰Ibid., 3 March 1895.

³¹Ibid., 15 March 1897.

³²Ibid., 12, 13 March 1897.

living arrangement of their twenty year old, unmarried daughter. When Nannie returned to Dripping Springs the following school term, she moved in with the Cookes supposedly because her mother disapproved of her using the stairs at the McKellars due to her poor health. Nannie continued to live upstairs at home during the summers. The Dorrohs used the excuse of Nannie's poor health to tactfully handle the change in boarding places, and Nannie remained close friends with both the McKellars and Cookes.

Locating a boarding place remained the teacher's responsibility but only in Leander did Nannie have any difficulty finding somewhere to live.³³ Nannie chose to teach at the larger town school instead of in the small rural school in her parent's community.³⁴ Because her family had moved into the area only the year before, they had not yet become familiar with the families in town. Nannie considered living at home, but the thought of walking the mile and a half each day--especially during inclement weather--made her uneasy. When she went to the hotel to see about accommodations, she discovered that it would cost her ten dollars per week to board from Monday night through Friday morning. Since she would only be making forty dollars per month, she protested, "I'd as well not work as to pay it all for a place to eat and sleep."³⁵ Fortunately, the Dorroh's closest friends in Williamson County, the Bitticks, moved to town that September, and Nannie arranged to board with them three days before school

³³Ibid., 16 September 1897.

³⁴Ibid., 21 October 1903.

³⁵Ibid., 24 September 1903.

started.³⁶

Teachers paid for their own board and additional expenses despite their already small salaries.³⁷ Once while boarding at the Duggers, Nannie claimed to have saved seventy cents by doing her own laundry, something she rarely had time to do while teaching.³⁸ In addition, her profession required her to own a more extensive wardrobe, and she had to pay her own way to teacher institutes. Nannie often complained about her meager pay, “we one-horse teachers have to do something to make our minnows go further.”³⁹ When her doctor prescribed medicine for her to take three times a day, she worried that the cost of the medication would use up all of her wages.⁴⁰ Nannie recorded that she earned only \$1800.00 gross pay for all nine years of her career.⁴¹ During the 1895-1896 school year, Nannie’s first year to teach, the average yearly salary for a white, female teacher in Texas was \$241.43. This average rose to \$266.82 for the 1902-1903

³⁶Ibid., 12 May, 20 September 1903. Nannie chose to make her first call in Williamson County to Mrs. Bittick.

³⁷Hays County Superintendents’ School Records, 1893-1894, Hays County Courthouse, San Marcos, Texas. The county superintendent’s accounts for the schools broke down the amount spent for each term including teacher salary, census taker, repairs, and fuel, yet did not mention money paid for board. Nannie always mentioned receiving her check, but only made a direct reference to paying board once while she attended school in Dripping Springs. Dorroh diary, 21 December 1894.

³⁸Dorroh diary, 17 January 1903.

³⁹Ibid., 17 September 1897.

⁴⁰Ibid., 28 April 1902.

⁴¹Ibid., 16 April 1904.

school year.⁴² When broken down, Nannie earned about \$40.00 a month or \$2.00 a day.⁴³

Because teaching contracts stipulated a person's wages per month, the length of each school term helped determine the teacher's annual salary.⁴⁴ Nannie and Lucy Black's average school term lasted 107 days ranging from the shortest school term of only 81 days in Duggerville to the longest term of 125 days in Fitzhugh--or about four to six months. Schools began after harvesting season. The most common school term in northern Hays County lasted from the first week of October through the last week of March. The Rock Springs School started on September thirtieth, the only time Nannie ever taught or even attended school that early in the year.⁴⁵ Because of the abundant picking season in 1900, the schools in northern Hays County did not begin until December "giving farmers a chance to gather crops."⁴⁶ Illness sometimes reduced the length of the term in the spring. For example, a measles scare closed the Pound's Chapel

⁴²Arthur LeFevre, *Public Education in Texas*, Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1 September 1903, 11.

⁴³Dorroh diary, 2 December 1902. While teaching in Fitzhugh, she claimed "my \$1.75 will be just as big" even though only a few pupils attended class. 27 January 1902.

⁴⁴Teachers in Hays County were paid once a month by the county, but their wages were prorated per day. Apparently, the County Superintendent controlled the pay so they could control teacher's swearing that their reports were correct each month and at the end of the year, despite the wages were determined locally by local trustees. Wayne Fuller, *The Old Country School: The Story of Rural Education in the Middle West* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1982), 133. The teacher reports will be discussed later in the chapter.

⁴⁵Dorroh diary, 30 September 1901.

⁴⁶*Ibid.*, 11 September, 9 November 1900.

School in Gatlin five weeks prematurely.⁴⁷ The loss of instructional days significantly reduced Nannie's total pay for the year.

Nannie preferred working as an assistant in a larger school than she did as the sole teacher in a one-room school even though she would make about ten dollars less per month. In Dripping Springs, the male principal earned \$65.00 a month, the first assistant made \$35.00, and Nannie received only \$30.00 a month. Nonetheless, in the larger schools she could vent her frustrations to other teachers and share responsibility if a problem arose.⁴⁸ After she and Lucy stayed up late one night relating school troubles Nannie acknowledged, "it's some relief to confide in another."⁴⁹ In addition, Nannie appreciated transferring some of the burdens of running a school to the principal. In Dripping Springs and Leander, she gladly shifted the responsibility of handling incorrigible discipline cases. Nannie had no one else to turn to for help with discipline in the one-room schools. But more than anything else, when Nannie taught at the three-room schools she simply liked having another adult in the building. Nannie felt threatened by the isolation of some of her one-room schools. Because the Pounds Chapel School in Gatlin had no homes or other buildings in sight, Nannie panicked when two drunk "scalawag boys" kept harassing the school. She even wrote to the county superintendent for help. Although her trustees eliminated the trouble by threatening to

⁴⁷Ibid., 18 March 1900.

⁴⁸Ibid., 9 March 1901.

⁴⁹Ibid., 23 November 1898.

bring in the law, her realization of how isolated the school actually was frightened her.⁵⁰ Nannie was more than willing to sacrifice some money in order to gain more peace of mind at a larger school.

Adding to the isolation of the one-room schoolhouse, the trustees of rural schools rarely provided any supervision.⁵¹ One trustee usually stopped by on the first day of school and then another might visit once during the year. After Mr. Roberts visited her class one day, Nannie described him as “a splendid trustee.”⁵² In 1896 Judge Ed R. Kone became county superintendent of Hays County and remained in the office throughout Nannie’s teaching career.⁵³ Occasionally Judge Kone visited Nannie’s schools and gave the children a motivational talk.⁵⁴ Considering his responsibility for the entire county, Kone came by the rural schools more consistently than the local trustees. Because his elected office held more prestige and power than that of rural trustee, he worked hard for reelection. According to Nannie, the local trustees seemed to regard their responsibilities as more of a burden. The trustees cared more for the immediate welfare of their farms than ensuring that the school had everything it needed.

An experience Nannie described in Leander demonstrated how the campaign for

⁵⁰Ibid., 2 March 1901.

⁵¹Thad Sitton and Milam C. Rowold, *Ringling the Children In: Texas Country Schools* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1987), 178.

⁵²Dorroh diary, 27 March, 29, 30 April, 30 September 1901.

⁵³Newspaper clippings, Harding Papers.

⁵⁴Dorroh diary, 28 October 1898, 13 January 1899, 4 April, 26 November 1901, 29 March 1904.

increased supervision as promoted by progressive education reformers could protect teachers. A parent complained because the Leander School required children who were absent to bring excuse notes when they returned to school even though Texas had no compulsory attendance law at the time.⁵⁵ Despite the fact that he lacked concrete legal standing, the principal, Mr. Owen, refused to budge on the issue and so the parent took his grievance to the school trustees. The parent sought an injunction to prevent the teachers from enforcing the new rule and threatened to sue the trustees for damages. Nannie even worried that the teachers' pay would be withheld. When the trustees defended the teachers, the parent brought the dispute before the county superintendent of Williamson County, but Superintendent Hamilton also supported the school. An editorial in the Leander newspaper complained that the rule requiring a written excuse deprived students "of their inalienable rights to free schooling." Nannie lamented, "such a little matter and Oh! such an ado."⁵⁶ Finally, the parent conveyed his objection to State Superintendent Arthur LeFevre. LeFevre concluded that the school made a reasonable request, and that it was a request of good schools.⁵⁷ The situation abated, but without the succession of authority, the teachers would have been left at the mercy of local politics and impetuous parents.

Just as Nannie gained greater peace of mind at a larger school only by sacrificing

⁵⁵W. F. Doughty, *Compulsory School Attendance*, Department of Education, State of Texas, Bulletin 53, 1 July 1916.

⁵⁶Dorroh diary, 4, 7, 8 February 1904.

⁵⁷*Ibid.*, 20 February 1904. Clipping from Leander paper inserted in diary.

some money and control, the increased job security and better working conditions promised by increasing state supervision required that teachers assume additional duties in return. And even though Nannie gladly accepted the give and take at larger schools, she complained vehemently about almost all of the Texas state mandates. As of 1893 the official duties for Texas teachers were to use only the English language when teaching, make a monthly report to hand into the district trustees before each monthly pay voucher, submit under oath an end of term report to the county superintendent, and attend summer normals and county institutes at the teacher's expense.⁵⁸ In 1899 the Texas legislature added the duty of maintaining a daily register.⁵⁹ Since Nannie could speak no language besides English, she wholeheartedly supported the first law. Texas had a unique situation compared with other southern states because it had greater foreign immigration. The large number of German and Mexican immigrants prompted the restriction of teaching school in languages other than English.⁶⁰ Only at the Dugger School did Nannie mention instructing students who spoke a foreign language. She wrote that her "little Dutch Polly & Albert" had not yet mastered English and protested that she "didn't make a contract for anything of this sort."⁶¹ In southern Hays County, the Mexican-American children

⁵⁸Carlisle, J. M., State Superintendent of Public Instruction, *Digest of the School Laws of Texas* (Austin: Ben C. Jones & Co., State Printers, 1893), 25.

⁵⁹J. S. Kendall, *School Laws of Texas, 1899* (Austin: Von Boeckmann, Moore & Schutze, State Printers, 1899), 34-35.

⁶⁰Paul Cubberly, *Rural Life and Education* (1914; reprint, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1922), 57.

⁶¹Dorroh diary, 18 November 1902.

attended segregated schools, but in northern Hays County the small number of Hispanic children were simply excluded from the white rural schools.⁶²

As for the other state regulations, Nannie saw almost no benefit to herself but clearly felt the additional burdens. She described the monthly and end-of-the-term reports as what she “hated to do” most, but she would not receive her paycheck until she finished her paperwork and swore to its accuracy before her trustees.⁶³ At the end of each term, the law required that she swear before the county superintendent. Nonetheless, teachers regularly made mistakes, and Nannie contended that it would take a lawyer to keep school reports straight.⁶⁴ For example, Garrett Black went to Nannie to help him figure out his monthly report after his calculations left him with 5 1/5 boys and 3 17/20 girls.⁶⁵ During a particularly troubling report, the principal at Dripping Springs told her, “Oh just guess at them & send them on any way,” but inaccurate numbers made it difficult for education superintendents to measure progress within rural schools.⁶⁶ Nannie dreaded swearing falsely before the county judge at the end of each term, however, so she worked conscientiously to fill the reports out correctly.

Nannie also dreaded traveling to county institutes. Teachers had a genuine complaint about the institutes since they had to pay their own expenses. While Nannie

⁶²Hays County Superintendents' Records.

⁶³Idorroh diary, 17 November 1897.

⁶⁴Ibid., 27 October 1899; 27 January 1900; 27 May 1902.

⁶⁵Ibid., 27 January 1900; 23 February 1900.

⁶⁶Ibid., 8 April 1899.

gladly accepted lower wages to gain protection at larger schools, she did not necessarily view the expenses incurred in traveling to teacher institutes as a fair trade for state protection. Nannie kept the program for a teacher's institute in Leander planned for 12 December 1903. County Superintendent Hamilton presided over the meeting and local educators presented lectures such as "Relations of the Teacher and the Trustees," "Sisk's Grammar as a Text," "Fractions: Methods for Beginners," and "Aids and Devices in Primary Grades." The program also had Nannie scheduled to present "Development of the Number Idea," but either the institute was canceled or Nannie wheedled her way out of participation because she spent December Twelfth shopping in Austin.⁶⁷ Nannie had previously taken advantage of the fact that the rules surrounding attendance at the institutes went somewhat unenforced.

Mr. Richard & Mr. Stubbs went, they'll put in our excuse,
I don't think they'll fine us, for what's the use.
To be forced to attend is not a bit of fun.⁶⁸

Although she decided at the last minute not to attend the San Marcos Institute in 1897, she did not receive a fine.

Despite the fact that her training was so minimal, Nannie seemed rather indifferent to taking advantage of the institutes to improve her qualifications to teach. Nannie began school in Driftwood a few weeks before her ninth birthday.⁶⁹ At age eighteen Nannie attended the Dripping Springs Academy for five months. She took

⁶⁷Ibid., 12 December 1903.

⁶⁸Ibid., 23 October 1897.

⁶⁹Ibid., 19 October 1900.

advanced courses such as rhetoric, physiology, civil government, and geometry not offered at the Liberty Hill School in Driftwood where classes only went as far as the eighth grade.⁷⁰ After only nine years of attending school, Nannie passed the teacher examination and began teaching the next fall.

The Texas school laws of 1893 divided the rural teaching certificate into four categories based on the number of subjects mastered by a candidate. To obtain a third-grade certificate, the candidate needed to test successfully in spelling, writing, grammar, arithmetic, Texas history, geography, elementary physiology, hygiene, narcotics, school management, and methods of teaching. The candidate had to achieve an overall grade of seventy to receive a one-year certificate. To acquire a second-grade certificate, the candidate had to pass additional tests in United States history, elementary principles of civil government, English composition, physiology, and physical geography. An applicant averaging above a seventy-five earned a two-year certificate, and an applicant averaging at least an eighty-five received a four-year certificate. To earn a first-grade certificate, the candidate had to test in all the previously mentioned subjects plus physics, algebra, elements of geometry, the Constitution of the United States and Texas, elements of mental and moral science, and the effects of tobacco and alcoholic narcotics. Once again, a seventy-five average earned a two-year certificate and an eighty-five average earned a four-year certificate. An applicant who also tested successfully in the history of education, psychology, English and American literature, chemistry, solid geometry, plane

⁷⁰Ibid., January 1895; F.M. Bralley, *Course of Study for the Public Schools*, State Department of Education, Bulletin No. 18, Austin, Texas, 1 September 1912.

trigonometry, and elementary double entry bookkeeping received a permanent certificate valid during the good behavior of the holder.⁷¹ Graduating from a normal school or from a school of pedagogy at a state university automatically qualified a teacher for a permanent certificate without further examination, but in 1904 only about 5 percent of teachers earned their certificates in this manner.⁷²

The grade of certificate often determined where a teacher taught. Only the lower paying rural schools accepted lower grade certificates. When Nannie's aunt, Hattie Martin, received her first-grade certificate, Nannie wrote, "Whew! If that were me, D.W. [Driftwood] wouldn't near do."⁷³ The first time Nannie took the examination she earned a one-year third-grade certificate. She retested during the summer of 1896 after attending a summer Normal in San Marcos and received another one-year certificate.⁷⁴ In 1897, Hays County awarded Nannie a four-year second-grade certificate, and she celebrated,

⁷¹J.M. Carlisle, *Digest of the School Laws of Texas, 1893* (Austin: Ben C. Jones & Co., 1893), 23.

⁷²*Ibid.*, 27. Second grade certificates made up over half of all the certificates held in Texas between 1904 and 1914. The first grade certificate would not overtake the predominance of the second grade certificate until 1920, sixteen years after Nannie quit teaching. W. F. Doughty, *Recommendations Regarding Public Education in Texas* (Austin, Texas: Von Boeckmann-Jones Co., 1914), 22; Texas State Teachers' Association, *Educational Progress within the State, 1904-1906*, 11-12; Texas State Teacher's Association, *Report of the Committee on Educational Progress within the State during the Scholastic Years from September 1, 1906 to August 31, 1910*, 25; Blanton, *Handbook of Information*, 453.

⁷³Dorroh diary, 4 May 1900.

⁷⁴*Ibid.*, 2 August 1897. Dorroh's diary from the year 1896 is missing from the collection, but she mentioned in entries from 1897 that she attended normal school during the summer of 1896.

“had the pleasure of getting a four year certificate too...so now for four years I can rest at my case.”⁷⁵ When Nannie’s four year certificate expired in 1901, she and her aunt Hattie Martin attended a summer Normal in Austin held in a local high school.⁷⁶ About sixty or seventy-five male and female teachers attended the classes from eight in the morning until five thirty at night. Unfortunately, Nannie’s grandfather died during the first week they were in Austin and so she and Hattie returned home. Since Hattie had received a first- grade certificate only the year before, she decided to remain in Driftwood after her father’s death. Nannie, however, needed a new certificate if she intended to teach the next year and so had to rush right back to school to complete the month long course.⁷⁷ State Superintendent Arthur LeFevre spoke at the normal’s closing ceremony.⁷⁸ Having earned “splendid grades,” Nannie received a four-year first-grade certificate. She rejoiced, “now I’m not confined to so small a place” concluding that her hard work and expense paid off.⁷⁹ Nannie was one of only thirty students to pass her exams--more than half of the students failed. She was shocked, “How horrible! they worked so hard, then to think that from certificates they’re debarred.” In 1903 Nannie’s friends, Garrett Black and Tyson Odom, also failed the exam to renew their certificates. Nannie wrote, “It’s

⁷⁵Ibid., 12, 17 April 1897. She mentioned studying U.S. history--a subject tested for the second grade certificate

⁷⁶Ibid., 1,2 July 1901.

⁷⁷Ibid., 14 July 1901.

⁷⁸Ibid., 30 July 1901.

⁷⁹Ibid., 8, 27 August 1901.

awful and they already had good schools.”⁸⁰ To avoid the humiliation of losing her own certificate, Nannie studied conscientiously for her exams.

But no matter how much training a teacher received, it mattered little in relieving the hectic schedule that one-room school teachers like Nannie endured. A teacher responsible for eight grades that each studied seven subjects taught up to fifty-six five or ten minute classes a day (Figure 4.1). In Gatlin Nannie recorded, “have them now from 1st reader to Algebra & Philosophy.”⁸¹ Curiously, Nannie appeared to be teaching a subject she was not yet qualified to teach since only teachers with first grade certificates took the algebra exam for certification, and at the time, Nannie only had a second grade certificate.⁸² She repeatedly fantasized, “How I’d like to teach just one branch, shall surely do so if ever I have the chance.”⁸³ In Fitzhugh she had extra work as well. There the trustees “were not satisfied with common school branches, but wanted rhetoric.” Nannie complained, “I had just all I could do I thought.”⁸⁴

Nannie and her students frequently worked past the usual 4:00 dismissal time to complete every subject. In Gatlin she wrote “getting pokey, can’t get thru--nearly five

⁸⁰Ibid., 22 August, 1,2,3, 16 September, 28 October 1903.

⁸¹Ibid., 24 October 1899.

⁸²Ibid., 2, 16 January 1900; 5, 20 February 1900. Nannie taught algebra, a high school course, to Minnie Black. Minnie may have wanted to take algebra to prepare for certification, but even though all three of her brothers and sisters taught, Minnie never took the examination.

⁸³Ibid., 19 January 1900.

⁸⁴Ibid., 14 October 1901.

Singing	8:45 to 8:55
Roll Call	8:55 to 9:00
Spelling Class, A	9:00 to 9:05
Spelling Class, B	9:05 to 9:10
Chart Class	9:10 to 9:20
First Reader	9:20 to 9:30
Higher Arithmetic	9:30 to 9:45
Lower Arithmetic, No. 1	9:45 to 10:00
Lower Arithmetic, No. 2	10:00 to 10:15
Recess	10:15 to 10:30
Chart Class	10:30 to 10:35
First Reader	10:35 to 10:45
Second Reader	10:45 to 10:55
Civil Government	10:55 to 11:05
Third Reader	11:05 to 11:20
Fourth Reader	11:20 to 11:35
Texas History	11:35 to 11:50
United States History	11:50 to 12:05
Noon Recess	12:05 to 1:05
Number Class	1:05 to 1:15
Chart Class	1:15 to 1:25
First Reader	1:25 to 1:35
Elementary Geography	1:35 to 1:50
Grammar School	1:50 to 2:00
Physical Geography	2:00 to 2:15
Second Reader	2:15 to 2:25
Hyde's Language Lessons, I	2:25 to 2:40
Hyde's Language Lessons, II	2:40 to 2:55
Recess	2:55 to 3:10
Chart Class	3:10 to 3:15
First Reader	3:15 to 3:25
Physiology, 2nd book	3:25 to 3:40
Physiology, 1st book	3:40 to 3:50
Spelling, B	3:50 to 3:55
Spelling, A	3:55 to 4:05
Writing, whole school	4:05 to 4:20

Figure 4.1: Schedule from a One-Room School in Milam County.

Source: Una Bedicheck and George T. Baskett, *The Consolidation of Rural Schools with and without Transportation*, Bulletin of the University of Texas No. 43, Austin, Texas, 1 October 1904, 8-9.

when she dismisses school.”⁸⁵ In Fitzhugh and Dugger Nannie had to open school a half hour early to try and catch up but met with little success because most students came late.⁸⁶ Although school began at eight, students trickled in until nine. Since Texas had not yet mandated compulsory attendance, Nannie had no meaningful recourse to discourage tardiness. The widespread belief that school began sometime after eight further impeded Nannie’s attempt to rush through the day and still do an adequate job teaching.⁸⁷ She anguished, “I was behind time all day--an hour most.”⁸⁸ Nannie panicked that she could not find time to fit in all the subjects. “If I can’t quicken my pace, don’t know what I’ll do.” Frequently, Nannie’s school fell so far behind schedule that she had to forego her free time at recess and lunch to catch up.

In order to stay on pace, Nannie’s watch remained one of her most important school supplies for she “put it in constant use.” She frequently had to send her watch with a male relative or friend to have it repaired in Austin or San Marcos. When her watch needed repair, Nannie said she missed it “more than some of my clothes.”⁸⁹ While teaching in Leander, Nannie complained that she lacked even enough time to have a

⁸⁵Ibid., 29 January 1901.

⁸⁶Ibid., 12 November, 18, 20 December 1901; 6 January 1902; 17, 24 February 1903.

⁸⁷Ibid., 26 January 1900; 16, 20 December 1901.

⁸⁸Ibid., 29 January, 20 February, 13, 15, 25, 26 November 1901.

⁸⁹Ibid., 21 December 1897; 28 November 1898.5 September 1902.

pleasant thought at school.⁹⁰ Nannie often compared teaching school to a prison and felt “like a bird out of its cage” on the weekends because of the unrelenting schedule she was expected to maintain.⁹¹ While keeping house she could take breaks or even naps, and visitors often provided welcome interruptions in the routine. No task on the farm ever required her to rush as much as teaching did.

Further exacerbating the hectic schedule, the chronic problem of poor attendance meant Nannie was constantly assigning make-up work and determining what student was where in the lessons. Rather than having perfect attendance, Nannie’s students received recognition for being “most regular.”⁹² The weather often played havoc with school attendance, more so than any other factor. Not one pupil attended school on the first day in Duggerville because of inclement weather.⁹³ Nannie’s friend, Garrett Black, also complained of low attendance; his school averaged less than ten students a day.⁹⁴ In the spring, a variety of diseases created great absenteeism if they did not completely close the school. The whooping cough started breaking up the Pounds Chapel School the last two weeks of class.⁹⁵ When chicken pox followed by “sore eyes” interfered with student

⁹⁰Ibid., 13 January 1904.

⁹¹Ibid., 29 March 1899; 1 January, 26 February 1901; 3 April 1902.

⁹²Ibid., 3 June 1903.

⁹³Ibid., 3 November 1902.

⁹⁴Ibid., 2 November 1899; 27 January 1900. During the 1899-1900 school year Nannie boarded with the Blacks, and Garrett returned home from his school on weekends.

⁹⁵Ibid., 3 May 1901. 18 December 1902; 8 January 1903.

attendance in Fitzhugh, Nannie sighed, “closing exercises won’t be much I’m afraid.”⁹⁶

The lack of a compulsory attendance law meant that most families determined their own school term rather than adhering to the official one.⁹⁷ When cotton picking season lasted into the winter, students stayed at home on the farm to help with the harvest. During the 1902-1903 school year attendance for children statewide dropped almost 18 percent because high cotton prices required children to help work in the fields.⁹⁸ Nannie often wished cotton picking season would end “then perhaps they can all come.”⁹⁹ While teaching in Gatlin Nannie wrote “hurray for me today” when finally, a month into school, she had a full class; on most days she described her school as a “little single handful.”¹⁰⁰ After having complained for two months that she lacked a full class, Nannie might then object to too much responsibility in December or January. New pupils entered with only two weeks left before school closed.¹⁰¹ Nannie could never establish a routine for long before she had to reorganize her classes. If the one-room schools had not promoted self-paced education, grading student achievement would have been hopeless. In the rural school, an older pupil who was needed on the farm might finish a grade by attending school for a month each year for three years rather than failing

⁹⁶Ibid., 13 February, 12 March 1902.

⁹⁷Ibid., 2 December 1901.

⁹⁸Arther Lefevre, *Public Education in Texas*, 10.

⁹⁹Dorroh diary, 18 December 1902.

¹⁰⁰Ibid., 6 November, 23 October 1899.

¹⁰¹Ibid., 1 March 1900.

the year over and over again. Nevertheless, it was no small wonder that filling out her monthly and end of term reports was such a nightmare. Nannie had to constantly amend her class roles.

Ironically, poor attendance actually worked in the teacher's favor when the school had an unusually large class size, Nannie's most frequent complaint during the nine years she taught. She believed the ideal class size was between twenty and twenty-four students any more than that rendering her fast-paced schedule completely unmanageable.¹⁰² While she wrote "the more we have the more interesting it'll be," when more than seven pupils showed up at Fitzhugh, her tune soon changed as students continued to straggle in through January until enrollment peaked at forty. She then complained almost daily of having "too many entirely to do by them as I'd like to do."¹⁰³ The more students she had to control, the more unhappy she was as a teacher. Her class sizes ranged from a peak of thirty in the Bluff Springs School to well over sixty in Leander.¹⁰⁴ In fact, Nannie lacked enough desks for all of her students in two of her seven schools. During the 1902-1903 school year students continued to enroll in

¹⁰²Ibid., 17, 23 October 1899; 15 January 1900.

¹⁰³Ibid., 15 November 1899. The reports from county superintendents between 1904 and 1906 revealed that the average class size in Texas contained an appalling forty-nine pupils. Texas State Teachers' Association, *Report of the Committee on Education*, 24.

¹⁰⁴Dorroh diary, 28 October 1895; 8 April 1898; 27 February 1901; 22 January 1903. In the Liberty Hill School Nannie and Mary Garison shared over fifty pupils in the one-room school. In Dripping Springs Nannie had thirty-one pupils. She also taught the twenty-one students in Professor Stubbs' high school geography class. Her class size reached thirty-six at the Pounds Chapel School. By the end of January, Dugger School had forty students.

Duggerville until Nannie had to furnish a new student with her own teacher's chair. Mrs. Dugger took pity on Nannie and offered her a chair from the house later that week.¹⁰⁵ The following year the Leander School opened with one hundred twenty pupils and only three teachers. Since Nannie taught the primary grades, she had by far the largest number. After starting the year with a burden of forty-five pupils, the number soon swelled to over sixty. Desks for all the additional students failed to arrive until five weeks after the start of school.¹⁰⁶ Nannie complained that she would "have to begin stacking them [the students] soon," and she did not understand why the community failed to complain about the situation.¹⁰⁷ To make matters worse, the principal, Mr. Owen, gave Nannie his high school history class. When his students came down to her room, Nannie had an additional twenty-five pupils to manage on top of her sixty. To get anything accomplished, she started dismissing hers a half hour early despite her guilt for neglecting her own pupils. Nannie complained that she was "just sick over her job" and threatened, "things must change or I'll thrash the school."¹⁰⁸ Poor attendance made the situation somewhat bearable. When only half of her students showed up (still thirty), Nannie wrote, "teaching is just paradise too, can do my duty and bring in something new." She bragged of having almost perfect order that day.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁵Ibid., 5-8 January 1903.

¹⁰⁶Ibid., 11 January 1904.

¹⁰⁷Ibid., 7 December 1903.

¹⁰⁸Ibid., 1, 4, 6 January 1904.

¹⁰⁹Ibid., 26 January 1904.

Nannie's work often continued when she returned home after a hectic day at school, especially as the end of school grew near and she began preparing for the end-of-term entertainment. Nannie protested, "All day in school is enough, then at night I need to rest some."¹¹⁰ The entertainments, however, had evolved into social events for the community and a great amount of work for the teachers. At her one-room schools the students decorated the schoolhouse, said recitations in the afternoon, and Nannie gave a final speech. The larger schools like Dripping Springs and Leander had more elaborate productions in the evening. When the Dorrohs attended the Leander School closing before Nannie applied there for a teaching position, the program included an opening prayer, twenty-nine recitations by different students, one pantomime, two songs, and two drills.¹¹¹ In Dripping Springs, Nannie began choosing pieces two and a half months before the end of school. She described the daily hunt for gender differentiated recitations appropriate for each grade level as "right vexatious" and complained of reading until her eyes hurt.¹¹² Once she located appropriate passages, Nannie copied pages by hand for each student.¹¹³ One night alone she wrote seventy-five copies.¹¹⁴ The plays, songs, and recitations required practice at recess, during lunch, and in the

¹¹⁰Ibid., 10 March 1903.

¹¹¹Ibid., 9 April 1903. Leander High School program inserted in diary.

¹¹²Ibid., 26 January 1898; 13 December 1899; 11, 12, 15 April 1901.

¹¹³Ibid., 12, 15 April, 29 October 1901; 3 February 1903.

¹¹⁴Ibid., 22 January, 11, 15 April 1901.

evenings.¹¹⁵ Nannie lamented that practice was even worse than school, and she almost always predicted that the entertainment would prove a disaster. After one practice she sighed, “one more such and surely we’d be insane.”¹¹⁶ In the end, however, the entertainments always came out “so much better than while getting it up.”¹¹⁷ The students cleaned and then decorated the house by “bumming nearly everyone in town” for flowers and other props.¹¹⁸ Several students provided the violin and piano accompaniment. Regardless of the chaotic preparations, Nannie always felt proud the night of the entertainment.¹¹⁹

In addition to her academic workload, Nannie also had the difficult task of maintaining discipline.¹²⁰ She often worried about particular discipline problems at night receiving little rest until she effectively handled the problem.¹²¹ Nannie gave lectures, used a switch to whip naughty children, placed miscreants facing the wall, separated talkative seat mates, made disruptive boys stand near the girls, and commonly kept naughty or lazy students in at recess. In her one-room schools, she would send students out to pick their own switches; in Leander she placed an order for switches through a

¹¹⁵Ibid., 24 January 1898; April 1898.

¹¹⁶Ibid., 4 April 1904.

¹¹⁷Ibid., 29, 30 March, 7, 8, 12 April 1904.

¹¹⁸Ibid., 7,8 April 1904.

¹¹⁹Ibid., 20 December 1901.

¹²⁰Fuller, *The Old Country School*, 209.

¹²¹Dorroh diary, 28 February, 11 March 1901; 23 January 1903.

local merchant. She triumphantly wrote that her “naughty elves” calmed down once they viewed her new purchases.¹²² She even expelled an adolescent girl for refusing to do recitations.¹²³ When another girl refused to take part in Washington’s birthday exercises, Nannie “plainly laid the law down” and the girl recited.¹²⁴

The threat of rebellion always existed, especially in the one-room schools. The isolated schools made mutiny a tempting and fairly easy accomplishment. In some extreme instances, an adolescent acted violently toward the teacher. In 1901 a student at the Bluff Springs School, one of Nannie’s former places of employment, stabbed a male teacher after receiving a harsh punishment.¹²⁵ Nannie never experienced excessive trouble herself, but she did have to assert her authority at almost every one of her schools.

In Gatlin she wrote

Some said that part would scheme around & not recite,
But I proved up my authority this time. . . .
This shows that I have the school under control.
There’s a bit of contrariness existing I’ll admit,
But I think I’ll straighten all this.¹²⁶

The malefactors often demonstrated remorse after Nannie disciplined them. After she whipped two boys for impudence, one gave her flowers and the other wrote her an

¹²²Ibid., 9, 10 December 1903.

¹²³Ibid., 30 January, 20, 28 February, 26 March, 19 April, 2, 11 December 1901.

¹²⁴Ibid., 19 February 1902.

¹²⁵Ibid., 12 November 1901, *Driftwood Dots* inserted in diary.

¹²⁶Ibid., 28 January 1901.

affectionate letter later that day.¹²⁷ While she did not always “have the heart” to whip her smallest students, she could give a lecture that would reduce the little offenders to tears.¹²⁸

An effective lecture was often a more productive discipline technique than always resorting to corporal punishment. Only once did Nannie go “on the war path” and apply the switch three times in one week, but many teachers did rely heavily on corporal punishment.¹²⁹ When Mr. Owen, the principal of the Leander School, had trouble with his “grown pupils,” he began slapping them right and left including some of the female pupils. Several members of the community complained about his severe discipline, and two boys quit school.¹³⁰ A popular nineteenth century education theory advocated hiring women as teachers because they supposedly nurtured students rather than always resorting to coercion.¹³¹ Perhaps Nannie endeavored to adhere to the stereotype of women teachers, but regardless of the implicit sexism, the softer techniques seemed effective for her. Although Nannie constantly worried about discipline, it appeared she maintained sufficient control over her classes.

Despite the stress Nannie incurred throughout the day from the struggle to teach

¹²⁷Ibid., 30 November 1899, 19 April 1901.

¹²⁸Ibid., 26 February 1902.

¹²⁹Ibid., 29 January 1903.

¹³⁰Ibid., 1,3 December 1903. Nonetheless, Mr. Owen returned to teach at the Leander School the following year. 30 April 1904.

¹³¹Fuller, *The Old Country School*, 161; Donald Warren, ed., *American Teachers: Histories of a Profession at Work* (New York: MacMillan Publishing Company, 1989), 315; Redding S. Sugg, Jr., *Motherteacher: The Feminization of American Education* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1978), 103-105.

and discipline her students, Nannie often believed “the worst job of the day was going.”¹³² She dreaded walking to school in the rural areas because she feared running into snakes, “mad dogs,” and strange men, especially on misty days when she was most “scared of something I might meet.”¹³³ Nannie’s blatant hostility toward the poor and minorities added to her often irrational fears.¹³⁴ One time she became “terribly wrought up” over a couple of “scuzzy” boys she encountered on her way to the Pounds Chapel School in Gatlin.¹³⁵ While teaching in Duggerville, Nannie felt protected when she had company on the way to school because she feared the relatively large Hispanic and African-American population, even though her escort was the Duggers’ black employee. She viewed the arrangement with the exact same rationale as bringing along her dog to protect her from other dogs.¹³⁶ In her mind, the Duggers letting her borrow Bill to reduce her anxiety on the way to school was no different than the Blacks letting her borrow “Buddy,” one of their horses, to get to school safely. While walking to church or some other community activity, Nannie traveled with a beau or a group of her friends. Because walking or riding a horse to school was the only time Nannie traveled completely alone on a regular basis, she had to sum up courage to do so.

In addition to Nannie’s active imagination, tangible difficulties such as muddy

¹³²Dorroh diary, 14 December 1899; 8, 25 February 1901.

¹³³Ibid., 16 December 1898; 6 February, 2, 3 May 1901; 15 May 1903.

¹³⁴Ibid., 9 December 1902.

¹³⁵Ibid., 25 October 1899.

¹³⁶Ibid., 19, 28 November, 6 December 1902.

roads, swift creeks, wind, rain, and sleet made the walk to school a precarious one.¹³⁷ Without radios or even telephones, Nannie could not inform her students when she canceled school due to inclement weather. She often risked formidable weather conditions just in case a small pupil showed up and was stranded alone outside. Once during a hard rain in Fitzhugh, Nannie arrived at school to find one young student there all by herself. No other students showed up for another hour.¹³⁸ During cold and wet weather, Nannie described the Pound's Chapel School as a regular wash room with all the aprons spread around to dry.¹³⁹ Almost every time it rained, the Gatlin Creek rose so that Nannie and her pupils would "almost need a little canoe to cross."¹⁴⁰ In addition to ending up soaking wet, crossing a swift creek was exceedingly dangerous.¹⁴¹ Eventually the Gatlin community built a bridge so that Nannie and her students would no longer have to search up and down the creek looking for a safe place to cross.¹⁴² When the creek rose in Duggerville, Nannie joked about having cavalry but no infantry because only the students on horseback could safely cross.¹⁴³ Duggerville also had a number of mud holes which surrounded the area. Nannie wrote she no longer needed a dictionary to fully

¹³⁷Ibid., 2 May 1901; 4 November 1902.

¹³⁸Ibid., 14 January 1902.

¹³⁹Ibid., 11 February 1901; 11 October 1901.

¹⁴⁰Ibid., 27 October 1899.

¹⁴¹Ibid., 11 April 1900.

¹⁴²Ibid., 5, 12 January 1900.

¹⁴³Ibid., 19 January 1903.

comprehend the meaning of mud as she walked to school, “gluey, nasty, and sticky is not near enough.”¹⁴⁴ She even had to fish out a couple of small children who fell in the holes dotting the school yard.¹⁴⁵

Nannie complained of feeling exhausted after walking to and from school and said the wind made her feel as though she weighed two hundred pounds. Tired of wearing so many wraps to school, Nannie checked to see how much they weighed; the scale read eleven pounds. If she had weighed all of her wraps together, she thought the total would have reached fifteen pounds. Also, she conducted her experiment when her wraps were still dry. As early as February, the afternoon temperature in central Texas could be “hot enough to melt” making for an uncomfortable walk home in a corset and winter dress.¹⁴⁶ Spring’s “changeable weather” meant cold mornings, hot afternoons, and unpredictable thunderstorms. Nannie dressed for cold mornings and possible showers then had to “wag” all her wraps home in the warm afternoon.¹⁴⁷

The weather continued to be a problem even after Nannie and her students arrived safely at school because the schoolhouses provided little comfort from the heat or cold. On springlike days Nannie opened the door and windows wide to ventilate the classroom.¹⁴⁸ Unfortunately, nice days did not last. Nannie often confronted the problem

¹⁴⁴Ibid., 14 January, 11 March 1903.

¹⁴⁵Ibid., 5 November, 5 December 1902.

¹⁴⁶Ibid., 19 February 1897.

¹⁴⁷Ibid., 8, 19 March 1901; 12 December 1902.

¹⁴⁸Ibid., 18 February 1901.

of whether to open the windows to ventilate the school or keep them closed to preserve heat.¹⁴⁹ A small, wood-burning stove provided warmth for the entire classroom. Often the ventilation was so poor that the stove smoked out the room or an adjoining class. The wind actually carried away their stove pipe in Fitzhugh. After listening to students complain about the cold, Nannie finally built a fire in the stove despite the obvious ventilation problems.¹⁵⁰ The ventilation at the Dripping Springs School was so poor that even when the “poor little children were so wet and cold,” Nannie could not build a fire at all without smoking out the other two rooms.¹⁵¹ In Leander Nannie’s stove tipped over during class, and the entire three-room school had to dismiss early.

Although providing fuel was the responsibility of the trustees, Nannie still had to send students out to hunt for wood when supplies ran low.¹⁵² When no one volunteered to help her, Nannie “wrapped up” and collected the wood herself.¹⁵³ Sometimes she had to send a pupil out to borrow a match so they could light the fire.¹⁵⁴ Nannie most vehemently criticized her trustees when they postponed setting up the stove in the first place. In 1901 the Fitzhugh trustees waited until November before putting up the stove, making repairs to the house, and hauling in wood. Nannie chided “we’ll be in working

¹⁴⁹Ibid., 19 February 1901.

¹⁵⁰Ibid., 5, 6 March 1902.

¹⁵¹Ibid., 26 October, 8 November 1897.

¹⁵²Ibid., 7 March 1901.

¹⁵³Ibid., 3 February 1902; 2 January 1903.

¹⁵⁴Ibid., 14 December 1899.

order yet.”¹⁵⁵ A cold front came the week before, and Nannie and her students were ready for a fire. While Texas weather might not necessitate a fire until October or November, Nannie felt it better to be prepared in advance of a cold front rather than wait until after the weather turned frigid. The trustees in Duggerville failed to put up the stove until late November forcing the children to build fires outside and huddle around the heat. Nannie called them in one class at a time to do their recitations.¹⁵⁶ Conversely, Nannie had few resources to provide relief from the heat. One February Nannie wrote that it had already become too hot to study.¹⁵⁷ As the Texas weather warmed up, Nannie used the wood to prop up the windows rather than as fuel for the stove.¹⁵⁸

Although the job of trustee also included upkeep of the schoolhouse, routine construction jobs often devolved to Nannie. She hung up the blackboards at the Liberty Hill School in her classroom and kept them painted. She replaced the windows in the Dripping Springs School “bottom upwards” but decided they were “bound to stay.”¹⁵⁹ The following school term she tried to keep out the draft by nailing boards over cracks in the walls. She held up a young boy by his feet to nail boards where she herself could not reach.¹⁶⁰ Nannie patched the windows in the Pounds Chapel School by using pieces from

¹⁵⁵Ibid., 11 November 1901.

¹⁵⁶Ibid., 17 November 1902.

¹⁵⁷Ibid., 12 February 1902.

¹⁵⁸Ibid., 27 March 1902.

¹⁵⁹Ibid., 10, 13, 30 December 1895, 1 March 1897.

¹⁶⁰Ibid., 1 November 1897.

the black board, and in Dugger she constructed a bench for pupils after she ran out of desks for new students.¹⁶¹ She thought her work a “poor job,” but the students had to sit someplace.¹⁶²

The one direct censure Nannie wrote in her diary about Texas rural education criticized the condition of the schoolhouses. While teaching in Gatlin she wrote:

We patched up our windows today with “pasteboard,”
Such school houses as Tex. does afford!
It’s a shame and disgrace to the state,
They ought to be comfortable at any rate.¹⁶³

In Fitzhugh, Nannie almost took her students outside when the wind seemed strong enough to actually blow down the old walls of their schoolhouse. She joked that she would end up teaching under a tree if the winds kept up.¹⁶⁴ The poorly constructed schoolhouses created a thin barrier between nature and the classroom. Nannie competed for space with squirrels, mice, snakes, lizards, wasps, and mosquitoes.¹⁶⁵ In Fitzhugh she groaned that the squirrels had taken possession. At one point students counted five squirrels on the ceiling at once.¹⁶⁶ Another time she complained of a mouse that visited

¹⁶¹Ibid., 14 December 1899.

¹⁶²Ibid., 6 January 1903.

¹⁶³Ibid., 30 January 1900. In 1890 State Superintendent Oscar H. Cooper valued school buildings in urban areas at \$33 per capita, but only \$3 per capita in rural areas. C. E. Evans, *The Story of Texas Schools* (Austin: The Steck Company, 1955), 111.

¹⁶⁴Dorroh diary, 27 February 1902; 4 March 1902.

¹⁶⁵Ibid., 11 December 1900; 3 October 1901; 29 February, 31 March 1904.

¹⁶⁶Ibid., 22 April 1901.

every afternoon writing “[I] can’t stand for it to come near me.”¹⁶⁷ Because mice and other creatures played havoc with her discipline by scattering the children in every direction, Nannie relied on the larger boys in her class to “murder” the pests.¹⁶⁸ Nannie also disapproved of the water supply for some of her schools. In Driftwood her family had a spring fed well near their home, in Leander their house had waterworks with two hydrants, but at school Nannie and her students drank from a bucket of stagnant water. In Fitzhugh Nannie expressed her disgust when she found two dead mice in the water bucket at school and the fact did not seem to bother some of her students.¹⁶⁹ Even worse, Nannie could not believe the children in Duggerville actually drank from a mud hole in front of the school. After each rain, Nannie referred the water and mud mixture which served as their water supply as “soup.”¹⁷⁰

The uncomfortable conditions and poverty Nannie witnessed while teaching probably fueled her desire to postpone marriage. She wanted to live in a clean, comfortable house that was not falling down around her. At her schools she witnessed a poverty rarely seen among her close friends and family. In Leander she noted with surprise that all of her pupils came to school despite the freezing temperatures and the

¹⁶⁷Ibid., 19 March 1902; 29 February 1904.

¹⁶⁸Ibid., 3 October 1901. Even though she lived in a rural community, Nannie never seemed comfortable with animals. Once, she mentioned that a lizard created excitement at prayer meeting. On another occasion, a snake under the arbor scattered everyone during a sermon. Dorroh diary, 20 June 1897.

¹⁶⁹Ibid., 22 January 1902.

¹⁷⁰Ibid., 27 November 1902.

fact that some children came barefoot.¹⁷¹ On another occasion in Gatlin Nannie expressed sympathy for the “little bare feet” one cold day, “‘Twas right hard to see them shiver.”¹⁷²

While she did not attempt to obtain shoes for her barefoot students, Nannie promised herself that no one in her family would ever go barefoot.

Nannie’s ambitions required patience before committing to matrimony, and teaching provided her the means of financial support which allowed her to postpone marriage. Nonetheless all the additional burdens placed on teachers tended to drive her out of the profession. Nannie complained, “So trying on the nerves, it’ll ruin anybody-- Don’t see how I’ve stood it nine years, hardly.”¹⁷³ The fact that she remained a teacher for so long despite the undesirable working conditions further reinforced the amount of patience she possessed to make a good choice in marriage. She wrote, “We’re tired of teaching, that’s a fact, and anxiously awaiting a good chance. Yes, it has to be good--the very best.”¹⁷⁴ Nannie thought farmers had the most desirable lives; a “man has full control of his own time, not bossed by others like we poor girls who work for the public and are criticized for every move made.”¹⁷⁵ In school Nannie felt as if she had to make too many people happy. If Nannie represented one of the most experienced teachers during her career, Lucy Black represented the norm for white, female teachers at the turn

¹⁷¹Ibid., 19 November 1903.

¹⁷²Ibid., 7 March 1901.

¹⁷³Ibid., 11 April 1904.

¹⁷⁴Ibid., 28 February 1904.

¹⁷⁵Ibid., 3 September 1902.

of the century.¹⁷⁶ Lucy taught three years, married, and left the classroom for good. Male teachers also viewed their profession as temporary work. When possible, men used teaching as a stepping stone to more prestigious careers like law and medicine. Two of Nannie's friends, Jim Black and Stuart Stone, deserted teaching after two years to begin medical school in Nashville.¹⁷⁷ Nannie's friend John Parker quickly left teaching to go to business school.¹⁷⁸

Nannie's aunt, Hattie Martin, was an exception in rural school teachers. She taught for a total of forty-five years, received her diploma from Sam Houston State Teacher's College in Huntsville, and never married.¹⁷⁹ Hattie taught from 1895 to 1910 in Hays County and the surrounding area. She taught in Asherton, Texas from 1911 to 1913 and then followed her brother and sister-in-law to Robstown in south Texas where she taught an additional twenty-eight years.¹⁸⁰ Hattie typified the generation of college educated women who--more than any other generation in American history--forewent

¹⁷⁶Ibid., 9 February 1904. As late as 1920 only 9 percent of teachers had more than four years of experience, and 38 percent of teachers had no experience at all. Blanton, *Handbook of Information*, 456.

¹⁷⁷Dorroh diary, 30 March 1901.

¹⁷⁸Ibid., 1 July 1901.

¹⁷⁹Genealogy records of the Martin family, Harding papers. Hattie received her degree on 23 August 1924

¹⁸⁰The school board named the Hattie Martin Elementary School in her honor when she retired after teaching twenty-eight years in the community. Genealogy records of the Martin family, Harding papers.

marriage in favor of a career.¹⁸¹ Annie Webb Blanton, elected State Superintendent of of Public Instruction for Texas in 1918, also remained unmarried throughout her career.¹⁸² At the turn of the century and the decades thereafter, women did not yet believe that a career and marriage could be compatible because marriage still required too great of a sacrifice on their part. Once electric appliances made housework easier, than women no longer felt trapped before the wash tub, iron, or wood burning stove.

By postponing marriage and teaching nine years, Nannie fell in between the extremes of Lucy Black and Hattie Martin but her experiences contradicted the assumption that women were forced to quit teaching when they married. Again and again education reformers expressed the view that since married women had to divide their attention between keeping house and teaching school, they would fail to do an acceptable job at either one.¹⁸³ Yet Nannie's friend and relatives refuted the idea that communities would not hire a married teacher. Nannie taught with a husband and wife team in Leander, and her cousin in South Carolina continued to teach after marriage. For Nannie, the more oppressive situation was not being forced quit, but being forced to endure the classroom whether she wanted to or not. Nannie's parents expected her to continue

¹⁸¹Kathleen Underwood, "The Pace of Her Own Life: Teacher Training and the Life Course of Western Women," *Pacific Historical Review* 55 (1986), 515, 526.

¹⁸²Debbie Mauldin Cottrell, *Pioneer Woman Educator* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1993). Male Texans elected Annie Webb Blanton the first female Superintendent of Public Schools of the state in 1918.

¹⁸³For example, John E. Carrico "A Study of the Employment of Married Women As Teachers in the Public Schools." Master's thesis, The University of Texas at Austin, 1933 and Hoy Chaddick, "The Problem of the Married Woman Teacher in the Public Schools." Master's thesis, The University of Texas at Austin, 1939.

teaching and earning an income until she married. According to the comments made in her diary, other members of the community expected she would also.

If I were to quit teaching, people'd have fits,
Seem to think we have to marry when we quit.
I'll show them a thing or two some day.
Will rest or teach, as I like, have things my way.
And tongues can go just as they please!
Such reports have ceased to bother me.¹⁸⁴

While Nannie boarded with the Blacks, she confided to Mr. Black that because “teachers have so much to aggravate,” she could not “blame them for marrying to quit.”¹⁸⁵ The greatest pressure on Nannie to go ahead and marry appeared to be her desire to quit teaching rather than vice versa.

Nannie could think of little worse than combining housekeeping with teaching. She expressed horror when she learned that her South Carolina cousin, Bessie Dorroh, continued to teach after she married.¹⁸⁶ While Nannie remained single, she escaped the heavy, domestic tasks while she boarded. After returning home at the end of a school term, Nannie complained that “such a washing, starching, sprinkling this child has done. The first I've done in six months...I'm so tired that I can hardly move.”¹⁸⁷ Once she married, however, she would no longer board and would lose the benefit of having her sisters and mother to share the burden of domestic work. Therefore, teaching after

¹⁸⁴Dorroh diary, 6 April 1902.

¹⁸⁵Ibid., 8 January 1900.

¹⁸⁶Ibid., 13 November 1900.

¹⁸⁷Ibid., 24 March 1897.

marriage would more than double her responsibilities. While Nannie never once referred to a community's reluctance to hire a married teacher, she made clear her assumption that any sane person would quit teaching after marriage. As with Hattie's decision to forego the institution in favor of a career, Nannie chose to give up her career in favor of matrimony because she believed marriage required too much of a sacrifice on the woman's part to attempt both.

Although Nannie frequently complained about her occupation, teaching allowed her to somewhat define herself before she married. Nannie gained a creative outlet and an opportunity to prove her competence at a wide range of tasks from disciplining children to carpentry. Teaching allowed Nannie to demonstrate her intelligence, experience success, and make her life feel more meaningful. Nannie sometimes acknowledged her worth as a teacher, "[there is] nothing more important than training Texas youths, preparing them for many vocations in life."¹⁸⁸ In addition, teaching provided her with more self-reliance as she had to overcome her fears of walking alone to school, discovered she would not melt in the rain, or engaged in creative problem solving to contend with the various mishaps that popped up each day. Most importantly, however, teaching provided Nannie with financial autonomy.¹⁸⁹ By the time she married, she had accumulated enough wealth to make a substantial contribution to her alliance far and above the traditional quilts and other pieces of a trousseau. While Nannie worked hard primarily to live in comfortable dependence, she still worried about becoming

¹⁸⁸Ibid., 21 March 1901.

¹⁸⁹Ibid., 26 February 1901.

completely dependent on another individual. Teaching allowed Nannie to contribute her own hard earned wealth and thereby gain the feeling of more empowerment in the marriage.

CHAPTER V
CONCLUSION

In order to understand how our values have developed over time, it is important to carefully consider the attitudes and behavior of those who lived before us. Not only must we remember that differences in race, class, and gender dramatically altered the experiences of individuals, but that each individual in a homogeneous group also developed differing perspectives. Each additional source more precisely reconstructs the social record. Unfortunately, traditional history continues to ignore the lives of common folk or, even worse, stereotypes a group before dismissing them. Many textbooks still fail to mention any social history before presenting current social problems.¹ How will students be able to properly interpret modern social circumstances if they are unaware of how they formed? The lives of great men will not reveal the answers, but the unextraordinary, constant, and pedestrian lives of common people will. Laurel Thatcher Ulrich wrote about her research for *A Midwife's Tale*, "it is the dailiness, the exhaustive, repetitious dailiness, that the real power of Martha Ballard's book lies."² Once the belief that women and ordinary folk provide no relevant wisdom for the historical record is dismissed, it becomes all the more evident how extraordinary each one of their lives truly was. Nothing in Nannie's life--whether it be her domestic responsibilities, her social

¹As an example, see David M. Kennedy and Thomas A. Bailey, *The American Pageant*, 11th ed. (Lexington, Massachusetts: D. C. Heath and Company, 1996).

²Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *A Midwife's Tale: The Life of Martha Ballard, Based on Her Diary, 1785-1812* (New York: Vintage Books, 1990), 9.

life, her religion, her celebration of holidays, the Confederate reunions, teaching, the age she at which she married, or unfortunately her racism--contradicts the current accounts of social historians. Yet Nannie's attitudes toward each one of these conventions was not stereotypical. Furthermore, her diary demonstrates the interconnection of rural institutions allowing us to better understand life through the eyes of a Southern, white, middle-class, rural woman and her community at the turn of the century.

While Nannie accomplished her primary goal of marrying a respectable and prosperous Driftwood farmer, her life still diverged from her original plan. Nannie wanted to settle permanently. At age twenty-one she wrote, "When I get an old man he has to settle down, not just run here and there."³ Less than five years after her marriage, however, Nannie and Albert moved west to Stanton, Texas and then on to Lubbock. But even more important than her goal to settle in Driftwood, Nannie sought social status. If she and Albert had stayed in the community, their standard of living would have inevitably declined. The productivity of the farms had begun to decrease in the 1890s and continued to do so in the twentieth century. In addition, if they had stayed, Nannie may not have achieved the social position she obtained in the west. Her husband held political office in Stanton, he owned a gas station in Lubbock, their children attended Texas Technological College, and according to her grandchildren, Nannie even acted as president of the WCTU in Lubbock.⁴ Driftwood's stagnation would have prevented similar political or educational possibilities that would have allowed her family climb the

³Dorroh diary, 18 June 1897.

⁴Robert Gray, Telephone interview, 10 January 1997.

social ladder.

Furthermore, whether or not she and Albert had stayed in Driftwood, Nannie would have lived in a different community from the one she fell in love with in the first place. Driftwood changed dramatically during the first decade of the twentieth century. Nannie and Albert Odom participated in a reverse chain migration of families that deserted Driftwood after the turn of the century. The Garisons moved to Buda in November of 1901 after Reverend Garison purchased a town lot.⁵ The Odom family followed Bob and Tyson Odom to west Texas to try cattle ranching. Bob Odom married Nannie's close friend, Minnie Black, and the couple settled in Stanton prior to Albert and Nannie's move there.

As previously mentioned, the Dorrohs left Driftwood in 1902 after a dispute over Thomas Martin's estate. Thomas Martin failed to leave a will, but at the time of his death in 1901, he owned a 564 acre farm valued at about \$2330 and a small amount of land in Mississippi. Apparently, the four living children of Martin's first wife split his estate in half with Callie Martin and her eight children. Therefore, each of the older children inherited \$300, and Callie and her eight children each inherited less than \$150.⁶ Some of Callie's children felt the arrangement was unfair. Because he had been running his father's farm, thirty-five-year-old Guilf Martin had no property of his own and believed that his labor warranted that a large portion of the property be left to him. His brothers and sisters seemed to support his claim. Hattie Martin, one of Nannie's former best

⁵Dorroh diary, 9 November 1901; Hays County tax roles, 1900.

⁶Dorroh diary, 24 December 1898; 9, 14 June 1902.

friends, called at the Dorrohs after having stayed away for "some time." After she left

Nannie wrote:

None of them have hurt themselves coming here for some while.
Haven't acted near as kin folks should do,
And, under the circumstances, we don't want them I'm sure.
It's simply awful to live thus, still there's no one lays the blame on us.
All this caused by the school trouble and division of the land.
Can hardly see how papa has taken all he has.⁷

Tensions continued to mount. Two days later Guilf threw a large rock at Nannie's father in front of the Martin house. While the rock missed him, Nannie believed her father had narrowly escaped death.⁸ Nannie's father announced his decision to leave two days after the incident, the same day Newt and Saloma Martin left for Robstown, Texas.⁹ Phoebe, Guilf, Hattie, and Lillie all eventually followed Newt and Saloma to south Texas. Emma Martin, the youngest child of Callie and Thomas, married at age twenty-eight and moved to Marfa, Texas with her husband. Only Nannie's uncle Tom Martin and his wife Lucy Black Martin remained in Driftwood.

In addition to the conflict over his father-in-law's will, that same summer D. L. Dorroh confronted disagreements while serving on the Confederate reunion committee over where to permanently locate Camp Ben McCulloch and as a school trustee over whom to hire for the 1902-1903 school term. After facing three battles in one summer, Dorroh stated that he no longer felt comfortable staying in Driftwood and began looking

⁷Ibid., 28 July 1902.

⁸Ibid., 30 July 1902.

⁹Ibid., 2 August 1902.

for a place to move.¹⁰ In December of 1902 the Dorrohs moved near Leander in Williamson County. Since the county had the highest cotton yields in Texas, the move also provided Nannie's brothers, Larrie and George Dorroh, a future in farming. Whether or not Driftwood was truly the ideal community Nannie depicted or simply the idealization of youthful eyes, her beloved community unraveled completely after only two decades in existence.

In bringing her to west Texas, however, Albert forced Nannie to spread her wings and take a chance for the first time in her life. The greatest irony of Nannie's youth was that she so often expressed resentment because she lacked the opportunity to spread her wings, and yet she ignored so many chances to do so. She celebrated when her first grade teaching certificate meant that she was no longer "confined to so small a place," but Nannie clearly preferred teaching close to home. The Liberty Hill, Bluff Springs, Dripping Springs, and Pound's Chapel Schools were all within eight miles of Driftwood and were intimately connected with the community. Nannie spent two-thirds of her teaching career at one of those schools. Nonetheless, Nannie appreciated the freedom of knowing she had greater choices, even if she knew she would never take advantage of them. Like a domesticated bird who hates being locked in a cage but remains inside when the door is opened, Nannie had no intentions of going anywhere but liked to know she could if ever she so desired. Staying had to feel like a decision. Because Nannie had so few options available which would allow her to postpone marriage, teaching felt more like a trap than an opportunity. As she looked forward to her impending marriage to

¹⁰Ibid., 8 October 1902.

Albert, Nannie wrote, "No I'll not remain in prison always, I'll be as free as the birds of the air in May."¹¹

Despite her frequent complaints, teaching did give Nannie the independence to postpone marriage. Nannie wanted to avoid marrying someone who would squander away her hard earned money. In fact, with every year she taught, Nannie gained more of a vested interest in protecting her property because she made good use of her earnings. Even though Nannie desired fashionable clothes and appreciated material items, she still invested a large portion of the money she earned. By the time Nannie retired from teaching, she had saved and invested \$700--almost 40 percent of her gross earnings. She loaned out money with Mr. Dugger and Frank Hall, the brother of Nannie's brother-in-law, Laurel Hall. Whenever Frank Hall visited, Nannie gave him more money to invest and he delivered her interest payments.¹² In addition, Nannie invested money in cattle and chickens. In 1900 her father and brother-in-law purchased and branded eight cows and calves for her which she claimed cost her about one hundred dollars. The new cows raised her total herd to twenty-five head.¹³ In 1902 Nannie also purchased one thousand dollars worth of life insurance for seven dollars a year. Finally, after she quit teaching in

¹¹Ibid., 25 March 1901.21 January 1904

¹²Ibid., 6 September 1900. Nannie's diary does not reveal the occupation of Frank Hall, where he lived, or even how he invested her money. While she wrote pages about her social activities, she would only make a quick reference to economic matters. While money remained important to her, she did not necessarily want to reminisce about her financial transactions.

¹³Ibid., 17 November 1899; 1, 25 May, 18 September, 3, 27 October 1900. While she was away teaching, Nannie's father informed her that three of her cows and a calf died. Nannie cried when she heard the news of her financial loss.

1904, Nannie purchased forty-five acres of her father's best land in Driftwood land for ten dollars an acre.¹⁴ Nannie had built up quite a substantial nest egg to add to Albert's farm when they married. Even though she did not have to, Nannie picked cotton in the summers before she married in order to earn additional money to invest. She believed working hard as a young woman would reduce her labor in the future and thereby raise her social status. Nannie built up financial wealth not necessarily for her own independence, but for comfortable dependence. Because of that fact she wanted to marry someone who would manage their estate responsibly. Nevertheless, she believed that by contributing property that she herself earned, she would not have to suffer complete dependence on her husband and grovel for pocket change.

In a family that viewed the domestic labor of six unmarried daughters as unessential to the family economy, the daughters felt more pressure to marry as they aged than sons. If she wanted to postpone marriage because she was a rational woman with common sense, then she would need to find a way to support herself. Nannie was lucky, though, because her financial circumstances did not demand that she marry immediately. Nannie's friend Bea Jaques, who married a widower with three grown children at age nineteen, had almost no choices. Her father had died leaving her mother a farm valued at only two hundred dollars. The family had no horses, cows, or even pigs. Bea did not have the luxury of living at home and teaching for nine years while she waited for a good match. She needed support immediately. Likewise, Nannie's friend Ida Harris married at age nineteen because her mother was also widowed with a small estate. Annie Harris had

¹⁴Hays County Deed Records, D. L. Dorroh and Nannie Dorroh, 1904.

seven children and a farm valued at only \$300.¹⁵ To help the family economy, Ida also had to marry young. While Nannie never appeared to realize the financial straights of the two girls' decisions, she did express pity for both young women who missed out on the social interaction of the community to raise families at such a young age. If Nannie realized the privilege of her ability to postpone marriage and reject such unattractive offers as those from widowers, she never acknowledged the fact in her diary.

Nannie's desire to have a good time going on boat rides, playing croquet, and singing lighthearted tunes reflected the urban, middle-class culture of the 1890s that embraced energetic, upbeat activities and music, but the uplifted spirit contrasted sharply with the somber mood America had experienced since the Civil War.¹⁶ The Confederate reunions may have been a partial reaction against America's decision to come out of mourning. The reunions viewed American culture as in moral decline and so proclaimed their mission to be a religious and moral revival. Thus, the reunions applied a moral overtone to the degradation of minorities and the exaltation of the Anglo-Saxon race. While Nannie gladly took up the banner, Lucy Black's diary was not nearly as contemptuous toward blacks as Nannie's. Lucy seemed to regard African Americans in a similar manner to Nannie's references to Germans. She noted differences in race and most likely considered whites to be superior to people of color, but she did not fixate on the subject of race and never used the crude language Nannie was so fond of. The work

¹⁵Hays County tax rolls, 1900.

¹⁶John Higham, "The Reorientation of American Culture in the 1890s," In *Writing American History: Essays on Modern Scholarship* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1970), 79-83.

of historian James W. Vander Zanden argues that while the belief that minorities were inherently inferior was the most wide spread racial theory of the late nineteenth century, he also notes that some people believed blacks could eventually overcome their inferiority to whites and that others believed African-Americans were just “different” from whites while not necessarily arguing inferiority.¹⁷ Perhaps we can somewhat excuse an individual’s belief system as a product of the times, but individuals were certainly accountable for their own actions. Just as they do now, people made their own choices on how they wished to treat other human beings. While Nannie often acted as an intelligent, plucky, highly motivated, and witty young woman, her disrespectful treatment of minorities clouds her legacy.

Nannie followed the lifestyle expected of an unmarried white Southern middle class woman: she played the piano, sang, visited neighbors, wrote letters, attended church, and taught school. But her thoughts did not necessarily follow stereotyped femininity. She was not a spiritual person. Historian Anne Firor Scott noted the importance of spirituality in the diaries of even young southern women.¹⁸ Nannie did not consistently believe it was her duty to lift the burdens of others, suffer quietly, keep her opinions to herself, or deny her own wishes. Even though she admitted these qualities were admired in women, she did not struggle with herself for failing to remain on her pedestal or keeping her thoughts devout. Nannie read often but never mentioned reading

¹⁷Vander Zanden, “The Ideology of White Supremacy,” 394-395.

¹⁸Anne Firor Scott, “Women, Religion and Social Change in the South 1830-1930,” in *Religion and the Solid South* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1972), 97.

the *Bible*, only joking once about her friend Minnie claiming to have been doing so. To her, those who remained within the moral parameters of the evangelical community were good people. While not a symbol of stereotypical femininity, Nannie was probably closer to the average rural, middle class woman.

Driftwood is now a community of 200. The Ben McCulloch Highway, littered with new suburbs for the booming capital, takes modern travelers from State Highway 71, cutting through Austin, to Driftwood. The Saltlick, a popular restaurant located across from the Ben McCulloch Campgrounds, attracts Austin residents to the area. The original Methodist church which served as the schoolhouse from 1895 to 1905 still stands long with the Driftwood graveyard filled with graves stones remembering the people scattered throughout Nannie's diary. While the Dorroh's, Martin's, and Garison's two-story farm houses are now gone, about a mile north of the church the home of Sydney Hall, Nannie's nephew and the son of Kate and Laurel Hall, is still occupied. Sydney and his wife Janice continue to live in the 105-year-old Hall home where Nannie frequently visited. The old barn and the old well still stand. Besides the automobiles behind the house, the property looks much as it would have during Nannie's life in Driftwood. The home has two small bedrooms, a front room, a tiny kitchen, a tiny dining area, and a front porch which extends across the entire home. Sydney described a small door off the second bedroom where the boys could come and go as they pleased. Nevertheless, it is almost unimaginable that Kate and Laurel raised eight children in the home. The Hall family still ranches in Driftwood, but they are being pushed out by wealthy urbanites who want a rural ranch in the beautiful countryside that is still close to the modern

convenience of the city. The Halls can only afford the property taxes on their now multi-million dollar ranch because they gain a tax break from using their property for open range.¹⁹ The cotton fields have long been abandoned, and Nannie's Driftwood is slowly becoming a suburb of Austin.

¹⁹Sydney Hall, personal interview, Driftwood, Texas, 17 January 1997. The 586 acre Leaning H Ranch, adjacent to Sydney Hall's ranch, was on the market with Kuykendall Land Company in 1998 for 4.5 million dollars. Marshall Kuykendall, telephone interview, 15 July 1998.

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