



Solomon Snow Hargraves Sr. 1887-1946
By his granddaughter Jean Rawlings Meaney, May 2006

PROLOGUE:

In 1856, Augustus M. Hargraves (from North or South Carolina) with his wife Lucinda Wardlaw (from Abbeville, South Carolina) moved from Greene Co., Alabama, to Bradley Co., Arkansas, with their five children and seven slaves, one of whom was named Floyd. They moved to this area because Lucinda's widowed mother Nancy Douglas Wardlaw and some other siblings had moved there prior to 1850. (The Wardlaws are an old and distinguished family – they can be traced back to the 1600s from Scotland. The Hargraves cannot be traced back beyond Augustus in Greene Co, AL, 1850.)

The Hargraves settled on a farm in Ouachita township just before the Civil War began. The family survived the War - Augustus was too old and his sons too young to fight in it - but like all the South, their circumstances were reduced by Reconstruction. Their slave Floyd Hargraves became a free man who lived out his life in Bradley County; he married a young wife and produced a whole crop of Hargraves children. His description of his former master was that he was a "mean man." (There is an A. M. Hargraves listed on the Bradley Co. blind Civil War pensioners so it is just possible Augustus M. Hargraves did participate in the War.)

Augustus died in Bradley Co. in 1874; his wife Lucinda after the 1880 Census. (Her mother Nancy Douglas Wardlaw's monument is in Holly Springs Cemetery in Bradley Co.)

Biography:

This grandson of Augustus and Lucinda Wardlaw Hargraves was born on 10 Oct 1887 in Bradley Co., Arkansas. Solomon Snow Hargraves was named "Solomon" from the Bible and "Snow" for his mother's brother Snow Andrew Jackson. Sol was the second son and the next to the youngest of five children. His father John Lewis Hargraves and brother Fenner were poor farmers who enjoyed hunting and fishing and living off the land. His mother Missouri Alabama Jackson Hargraves encouraged Sol to go to school and make something of himself.

Sol graduated from school in Bradley Co. and then worked his way through law school in Little Rock. While working as a soda jerk in a Little Rock drugstore (Billheimer's), he met a beautiful school teacher Lucy Olmon Sanders who had come from Forrest City to Little Rock on the train to visit her Billheimer cousins who owned that drug store. Lucy was initially attracted to Sol's dark curly hair. Later she was to tell her descendants he was the best-looking man she had ever seen!

But there was a problem. He was married to Effie Sled in Bradley County. Apparently, he had been forced to marry her because they found themselves in a compromising situation. Shortly after divorcing Effie, he married Lucy the day after Christmas 1910 in her mother's home in Forrest City, a month after the death of her father Joseph Boone Sanders. The parlor was decorated for Christmas and her wedding. Her wedding costume was a dark navy blue trimmed in black so I am wondering whether she chose those colors because she was in mourning for her father.

Taking the 4:30 train from Forrest City to Little Rock, they honeymooned at the Marian Hotel and then lived in the home of Mrs. C. Watkins on East 5th St. (Many many years later when Olmon and Ruth were in Bradley County researching the family history, Effie Sled asked them to come see her because she wanted to know what her children would have looked like. I am not making this up! What is amazing too is that Lucy, a very strict Baptist, would even consider marrying a divorced man.)

After Sol graduated from law school in 1912, they settled in Forrest City where he began law practice with his old friend from Bradley County Fred Harrelson. Fred had been best man at his wedding and proceeded to court and marry the maid of honor Pearl Crippen. Their first law office was in the courthouse.

In 1912 Sol and Lucy welcomed their first son Olmon Hall Hargraves, named for his mother's middle name and her beloved deceased brother Hall who had been murdered by Sheriff Casteel; Etta Mae, named for Sol's two living sisters - Mary Etta and Arcadie Mae, was born 3 years later in 1915. Ruth Roberta was born in 1919. In December 1923 they

welcomed their second son Sol Jr.

In May 1924 Sol Sr. took his two oldest children - Olmon (age 12) and Etta Mae (age 9)- to Washington, DC, where he tried a case before the US Supreme Court against the Missouri Pacific Railroad and won. **MISSOURI PAC R. CO. v. PRUDE, 265 U.S. 99 (1924)** Lucy, Ruth (age 5) and Sol Jr., who was just a baby, stayed in Forrest City. Both Olmon and Etta Mae remembered some things about their trip to DC. Olmon remembered the brass doors on the Library of Congress when he went back there many years later. Etta Mae remembers walking up the steps of the Supreme Court and the shoes and socks she was wearing.

In 1917 both of Sol's parents were living with them and the children in Forrest City. Also Sol's brother Fenner and his 5 children were also in Forrest City (his wife had died in 1915) - not clear whether they were living with Sol's family. (By 1920 Fenner's youngest is listed as an orphan and living with a family in Bradley County even though only his mother was dead.) Sol's mother Missouri died in 1917 in a Memphis hospital following surgery for appendicitis, and is buried in Forrest City Cemetery near the Courthouse; John Lewis Hargraves apparently moved back to Bradley County and clerked in a store there because we have a picture of him from that time.

In 1920 the S.S. Hargraves were living in their large Victorian home with two boarders (school teachers) whom Etta Mae remembers as dressing up as Santa one Christmas. Etta Mae says it had a barn or woodshed separate from the house and their father had put up a merry-go-round (the kind you push yourself) in the back yard. (She broke her nose on it.) She also remembers her Uncle Fenner and his children coming to visit and telling them there was no Santa Claus. Fenner's motherless children apparently had very little materially in comparison with Sol's children. The house they lived in at that time is pictured with two cars and a lovely wraparound porch. Not bad for a poor farmer's son!

John Lewis Hargraves must have moved back to Forrest City later because Etta Mae remembers her grandfather sitting on the front porch of their house spitting tobacco juice into her mother's flowers and how mad that made her mother. John Lewis died in 1926 and was buried next to Missouri in the City Cemetery. Olmon graduated in 1927 from Forrest City High School and the family moved to Memphis where Sol practiced law in both Memphis and Forrest City; the children went to Memphis schools, and on to college at Memphis State.

To their credit, although the family did not have much money during the Depression, Sol and Lucy made sure their children had higher educations. Olmon attained a law degree and Etta Mae obtained her Master's degree. Ruth graduated from college; Sol Jr. misrepresented his age so he could join the Merchant Marines during WWII so he completed his education after the War at UT in Knoxville. S. S. Hargraves practiced law in both Memphis and Forrest City. We have a picture of him in the 1930s in his Memphis office.

He also had a farm where the family spent summers and raised cotton. Around 1937 five lawyers in Forrest City decided to get rid of Sol's practice because he got all the good cases and won nearly every one of them. They found he had taken a deposit of \$50 or \$60 from a client to hold for him, and deposited it into his general account instead of his law escrow account. They took him to court and he was prohibited from practicing law in Arkansas for five years. Needless to say, these were tough times for the family. Ruth recalls that her mother cried a lot.

Shortly after September 1943, the family moved back to Forrest City to a house on Rosser Street across from the Elementary School and S. S. Hargraves resumed his Arkansas law practice. Olmon, Sol Jr., and Etta Mae's husband were fighting in WWII.

There was a joyful reunion when the guys came home safely from the War in late 1945, early 1946. But the joy was short-lived because S.S. Hargraves died in Forrest City of a heat stroke in August, 1946. He was 59. He prided himself on wearing a suit (usually white in the summer) when in the court room. In the days before air conditioning he became extremely hot and that precipitated his death. They brought him home to Rosser St. where he died. Lucy grieved greatly. She loved and esteemed him highly. They buried him in Mt. Vernon Cemetery on the outskirts of Forrest City.

Sol and Lucy were blessed with 4 children, 11 grandchildren and 15 great grandchildren and now counting great greats...