McKOY and RYALS Family Reunion

John David Ryals and Lula Blalock

John David Ryals and Lula Blalock were married in Harnett County. John was the son of David Ryals and Eliza McKoy. Lula was the daughter of Frank and Catherine Blalock. Their children were Mary Lee, Elizabeth, Lillie, Elijah (Bud), Henry, Catherine, Josephine, Barbara (Bobbie), and Nathaniel (Buddy). They all grew up on their farm in Erwin, North Carolina.

The farm seemed endless. There were apple orchards. The peaches and mulberry trees were amongst the corn, cotton, and tobacco fields that spread up and down the hillsides. Uncle John was a lumber tagger during the off season. He often worked for the Stewart Lumber Company in Coats, North Carolina as a lumber tagger. One of his big jobs with the lumber company was to go to Washington, D.C. and persuade his sister Ella to sell the first timber from Grandpa Dave Ryals’ farm. It was in the 1940’s and the timber sold for $5,000.00, but in 1997, the same amount of timber sold from that plot brought more than $50,000.00. I wish Uncle John was here with his wagon and that old, grey mule Nellie still tagging timber and running the farm. It would bring a big smile on his face.

Uncle John and Aunt Lula were very religious. Aunt Lula was on the mother board of the church as Pisgah Top and Uncle John was a deacon. Any Sunday morning at church you knew he was there because you could hear his big bass voice ring throughout the church. Really he could bass for a choir himself. All of us attended this church as we grew up. Both Lula and John are deceased.

Aunt Lula had many careers. She could have opened her own laundry or bakery. She was one of the best cooks around. Her specialties were cakes and pies. The recipes were handed down to her daughters, Josephine and Barbara. Instead of pursuing the other two careers, she chose to be a mid-wife and was one of the best in Harnett County. They came from all over to use her services. She could load up her long black car, which I think was a Packard, to deliver a boy or girl. Many of whom attended the McKoy and Ryals Family Reunion which was held July 31 –August 2, 1998, at the Holiday Inn in Green Belt, Maryland. She just chauffeured herself around.

Uncle John and Aunt Lula both had a great sense of humor. They could bring the house down with a good joke. There’s nothing like family and we are glad the Blalocks are ours.

Taken from the McKoy and Ryals Family Reunion Program --July 31-August 2, 1998 at the Holiday Inn in Green Belt, Maryland