

Tom C. Nicholson
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Mrs. George Funk
P.O. Box 333
McLean, Illinois
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FIRST CLASS

FIRST CLASS

Sent September 1983 to Elizabeth "Dadie" (Nicholson) Funk by Tom Nicholson. Contains life story of Thomas Nicholson (not same) along with family pictures.



Bill Motley and Wife

"worked 2 different years for
him on farm. Drank like _____."



Sam Motley



Tom and Ethel Motley



Thomas Stir Whittle Motley



Great-grandma Nicholson
Aunt Sarah Motley



Thomas Stir Whittle Motley
Rebecca Collins Motley



Tom and Joe Nicholson



Jimmie Nicholson and ?



Ethel Motley



Bill Motley



Jimmie Nicholson

Died when 9 years old.
Was going to school at Washington
School and came out a recess
time and with other boys
jumped on a bob sled loaded
with wood and was run over
and killed.



Mrs. Rebecca Motley



Sarah Motley
"Good Christian Woman"

My life from 1882 to 63

Born May 28th 1882 in Lone Tree Iowa. Grand Ma Motley came out to take care of my mother when I was born. She stayed 2 weeks. My father and mother took her to the train depot at Grinnell Iowa. ^{in a team and wagon} When the train left a tornado came through and wrecked Grinnell. My father stopped on the way home in a log cabin. The wind was so bad it blew the wagon ^{around} with team hitched to it. It blew fence boards into trunks of trees and feathers off of chickens. He farmed 3 or 4 years out there. One year the corn crop froze and the next year his hogs died with the cholera and he had to quit.

He moved back to Keokuk, Ill. ~~He~~
rented the land west of Grove St.
to West St. and north of railroad
tracks and planted it to corn.
On ground where Boes and Boiler
Shops are. Man by name of Joe Moore
owned. He had a son John and a
daughter Fanny. I was 4 years old
then. We moved to 109 N. Elm. My
grandfather sold my folks a little
house there and they were to pay
for it as rent and when grand-
father died there was nothing in
the will to that effect. Uncle Tom and
Uncle Bill says if my mother wants
the house they can pay for it. I was
fast 4 when I moved there. The
old center school was completed in
1885 and they had lots of room
and I started to school at the
age of 5. St Paul's German Church
had a German school across from

our school and. Winter times we used to have snow fights and Superintendent used to line the boys up and give them a strapping for snow-balling the German kids. I used to wait till the 5 minute to 9 bell rang and I would run to school. $1\frac{1}{2}$ blocks away. Used to run errands and mow lawns and chop kindling for pennies. In the Spring I used to ~~go~~ walk out in the country with spade ~~and~~ and sack and dig horse radish roots and pack it home and clean and grate it and put it in glasses and sell it to the neighbors. In the summer time the city had band concerts in East Park. People sat on long planks to listen to the music and I would pop and butter popcorn at home and carry 2 big market baskets full of

sacks I sold for 5¢ each. I lived 1½ blocks from the park. I lived at 1097 Elm St till I was 23 yrs. old.

Every year all the kids had fire crackers and fire works. As I got older I made more noise on the 4th. I got a job in the summer at the Boes factory. I ran the machine shop. 50¢ a day for 10 hrs. Jack Mathison was for man and he made me a big cannon out of shaft steel and the neighbors all knew I had a cannon. Now I am past 80 and I look back and think that was all nonsense. W.C. Fulton got married on the 3rd of July one year and lived accross from me and he said they had a bad night, couldnt sleep. George Bowen lived next to us on the north. He was a great man, owned 10 farms, a great hunter. He used to go

up north of Umanawau and would
to the Swamps and stayed a
week at a time and would
bring home hundreds of ducks
and geese and of course I was
always over there when he came
home and he would give me
some of the poor kinds such as
pin tails and teal. They would
just keep the breasts and
throw the rest away. He used
to hunt rabbits and bring
home dozens of them. He hunted
wolves and foxes around here.
He used to go buffalo hunting
when buffalo were thick out West.
He would go big game hunting
for moose, elk, deer, antelope
and bear. He would bring us
over roasts when he got home as
people didn't have ice boxes then.
He was interested in land at Cody
Wym. and made trips out there and

she used to talk body sym. to me
 and I wanted to go to body. I was
 working in the foundry as bench
 moulder and thought I would
 quit and work for my Uncle Bill.
 I worked 10 months for him and saved
 all my wages \$30 a month \$300 and I
 had won a grand concert guitar
 and rented it out for 50¢ a week
 and used that for spending
 money all summer. The Worlds
 Fair at St Louis was on that
 Fall and I asked Parlow about
 us two going to Fair and I would
 pay expenses. We went and
 stayed a week and had a good
 time. When I got back I bought
 a ticket to body \$18⁵⁰ round trip
 Took my 22 colts repeating rifle
 along and shot at musk rats
 and prairie dogs from the car
 windows and when the train

would stop for water. I would take my 22 and go out and walk around with it. Other men shot out the windows with revolvers. No one said anything. I had the stalk loose and I put it together when I shot it. Took it apart when I got on train and off. When I got to Cody. There is no railroad bridge to town so you could take a stage coach or walk. Most people walked and so did I. When we were walking into the town, the people were showing where the bank robbers were shot trying to rob Cody bank and I got to feeling funny as I had 2 hundred and some dollars in my shoes. I went to a hotel ^{and} rented a room and came down and walked around town till bed time and went to bed and a big fat man was in my bed and I complained

To the clerk and he said the excursion
 brought a big crowd and couldn't
 help it. He had most of the bed. I
 think I kept my clothes and shoes
 on. For a few days I run around
 Cody. Went fishing with a man.
 Drank some alkali water and got
 dysentery ^{and} dysentery and was about
 ready to go home. A man told me to
 get some black berry balsam and
 that fixed me up. A Kewanee man
 by the name of Charles Bradbury heard
 I was in town and he hunted me
 up and took me out to his farm
 9 miles and I stayed and helped
 him around the farm till I got a job.
 John Buchanan had a son. He took a
 car load of his father's horses to Kansas
 City and sold them and got in with
 a bad gang and he spent the money.
 He was afraid to come home and face
 his father, so he shot himself and I

his job on a big ranch where they had 550 head of stock. Rented 15000 acres of grazing land for less than 1^{cent} an acre. They had 490 acres of alfalfa, 60 acres wheat and barley. I had the job of irrigating a four acre garden patch and planting it. They irrigated the whole 550 acre farm. I had a job keeping the 6 ft. mowers sickle blades sharp. I had a grind stone and foot pedal. I had taken a rural exam. for rural mail carrier and I folks wrote me. The postmaster said if I wanted the job to come and take it so I did. I saved most all my wages so when I got back I bought a horse, new buggy and new harness and started to carry mail on a 27 mile.

mile route north of town and west
 of town. All hills and clay roads.
 If road were too bad for buggy I
 went horse back with a heavy
 fur coat and overshoes and
 walked and led the horse some
 times for miles. I walked the
 route 4 trips a week for 4
 weeks when the roads were
 impassable. Got the mail to
 them some way every day. I
 used to bring medicine and other
 things out for farmers in bad
 weather. After I was on the route
 a year I went to an ice cream social
 and met Bertha Warner and in
 time were married. Patrons on the
 route took up collection and bought
 me a bed, springs and mattress.
 I bought a \$25 cook stove at Montgomery
 Ward and we were in business.
 Rural Route pay was \$60 a month.

Paid once a month. I had to keep
 a team of horses and live on it and
 buy uniforms. Now the carriers
 are allowed \$100 for uniforms.
 I made the rural route on a cheap
 bicycle. Coasted down the hills
 and walked up them. I took exam.
 for city carrier and transferred
 to city carrier, \$50 a month. Had
 to be at Post Office every Sunday
 morn. as people come after their
 mail on Sunday. Mail was collected
 out of all boxes on Sunday. I leased
 10 acres on Fischer Ave. and moved
 out there. Had a cow, pig, horse, and
 lots of chickens: a 500 egg incubator.
 I farmed it all. Had $\frac{1}{2}$ in garden truck
 which I hauled to town and sold. He
 lived there about 7 yrs. Sale was

To be born Jan. 11th and Beetha
 said she didn't want to stay out
 there in that little old cold house
 and have a baby so we put an
 adv. in the paper to lease it
 and we moved to town. I bought
 a house of the Boiler Co. They
 bought a tract of land north
 and I bought the Tom Howland house
 and had it moved to a lot we
 bought at 805 West Prospect St. for
 \$450 from Tyman Fay Co. Bought
 the house with \$25 down. Borrowed
 \$500 from bank to pay for lot. Used
 the \$50 to put foundation in. Went
 to Building and Loan and financed
 the deal. Did most of work myself.
 In the meantime we get a new
 Post master

My Life from 1882 to '63.

Born May 28th, 1882 in Lone Tree Iowa. [Grandma Motley](#) came out to take care of my [mother](#) when I was born. She stayed 2 weeks. My [father](#) and mother took her to the train depot at Grinnell, Iowa in a team and wagon. When the train left, a tornado came through and wrecked Grinnell. My father stopped on the way home in a log cabin. The wind was so bad it blew the wagon around with the team hitched to it. It blew fence boards into trunks of trees and feathers off chickens. He farmed 3 or 4 years out there. One year the corn crop froze and the next year his hogs died with the cholera and he had to quit.

He moved back to Kewanee, Ill. He rented the land west of Grove Street to West Street and north of railroad tracks and planted it to corn. On ground where Boss and Boiler Shops are. Man by the name of Joe Moore owned it. He had a son John and a daughter Fanny. I was 4 years old then. We moved to 109 N. Elm. My grandfather sold my folks a little house there and they were to pay for it as rent and when grandfather died there was nothing in the will to that effect. Uncle Tom and Uncle Bill said if my mother wants the house they can pay for it. I was past 4 when I moved there.

The old center school was completed in 1887 and they had lots of room and I started to school at the age of 5. St. Paul's German church had a German school across from our school and during winter times we used to have snow fights and Superintendent used to line the boys up and give them a strapping for snowballing the German kids. I used to wait till the 5 minute to 9 bell rang and I would run to school, 1 1/2 blocks away.

Used to run errands and mow lawns and chop kindling for pennies. In the spring I used to walk out in the country with a spade and a sack and dig horseradish roots and pack it home and clean and grate it and put it in glasses and sell it to the neighbors. In the summertime the city had band concerts in East Park. People sat on long planks to listen to the music and I would pop and butter popcorn at home and carry 2 big market baskets full of sacks I sold for 5 cents each. I lived 1 1/2 blocks from the park. lived at 109 N. Elm Street until I was 23 years old.

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then. He was interested in land at Cody, Wym. and made trips out there and he used to talk Cody, Wym. to me and I wanted to go to Cody.

I was working in the foundry as bench moulder and thought I would quit and work for my Uncle Bill. I worked 10 months for him and saved all my wages (\$30 a month - \$300) and I had won a grand concert guitar and rented it out for 50 cents a week and I used that for spending money all summer. The World's Fair at St. Louis was on that Fall [1903 or 1904] and I asked Pa how about us two going to the Fair and I would pay expenses. We went and stayed a week and had a good time.

When I got back I bought a ticket to Cody - \$18.50 round trip. Took my 22 Colts repeating rifle along and shot at muskrats and prairie dogs from the car windows and when the train would stop for water. I would take my 22 and go out and walk around with it. Other men shot out the windows with revolvers. No one said anything. I had the stock loose and I put it together when I shot it. Took it apart when I got to Cody. There is no railroad bridge to town so you could take a stage coach or walk. Most people walked and so did I. When we were walking into the town, the people were showing where the bank robbers were shot trying to rob Cody bank and I got to feeling funny as I had 2 hundred and some dollars in my shoes.

I went to a hotel and rented a room and came down and walked around town till bed time and went to bed and a big fat man was in my bed and I complained to the clerk and he said the excursion brought a big crowd and couldn't help it. He had most of the bed. I think I kept my clothes and shoes on.

For a few days I ran around Cody. Went fishing with a man. Drank some alkalai water and got dysenterry and was about ready to go home. A man told me to get some black berry balsam and that fixed me up. A Kewanee man by the name of Chas Bradbury heard I was in town and he hunted me up and took me out to his farm 9 miles and I stayed and helped him around the farm till I got a job.

John Buchanan had a son Nelson. He took a car load of his father's horses to Kansas City and sold them and got in with a bad gang and he spent the money. He was afraid to come home and face his father, so he shot himself and I got his job on a big ranch where they had 500 head of stock. Rented 15,000 acres of grazing land for less than 1 cent an acre. They had 490 acres of alfalfa, 60 acres of wheat and barley. I had the job of irrigating a four acre garden patch and planting it. They irrigated the whole 550 acre farm. I had a job keeping the 6 ft. mower sickle blade sharp. I had a grind stone and foot pedal.

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I used to bring medicine and other things out for farmers in bad weather. After I was on the route a year I went to an ice cream social and met Bertha Warner and in time we were married. Patrons on the route took up a collection and bought me a bed, spring and mattress. I bought a \$25 cook stove at Montgomery

Wards and we were in business.

Rural Route pay was \$60 a month, paid once a month. I had to keep a team of horses and live on it and buy uniforms. Now the carriers are allowed \$100 for uniforms. I made the rural route on a bicycle. Coasted down the hills and walked up them. I took exam for city carrier and transferred to city carrier - \$50 a month. Had to be at Post Office every Sunday morning as people came after their mail on Sunday. Mail was collected out of all boxes on Sunday. I leased 10 acres on Fischer Avenue and moved out there. Had a cow, pig, horse and lots of chickens and a 500 egg incubator. I farmed it all. Had half-ton garden truck which I hauled to town and sold. We lived there about 7 years.

Dale was to be born January 11th and Bertha said she didn't want to stay out there in that little old cold house and have a baby so we put an advertisement in the paper to lease it and we moved to town. I bought a house off the Boiler Co. They bought a track of land north, and I bought the Tom Howlands house and had it moved to a lot we bought at 805 West Prospect Street for \$450 from Tyman Tay Co. Bought the house with \$25 down. Borrowed \$500 from bank to pay for lot. Went to a Building and Loan and financed the deal. Did most of the work myself. In the mean time, we got a new Postmaster.

Letter believed to be handwriting of [Thomas Nicholson](#)
12 page letter was a copy sent to [Elizabeth Nicholson \(Funk\)](#)
by [Thomas C. Nicholson](#) in a [September 1983 letter](#).

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Tom C. Nicholson
RR#1 Box 107D
Lynn Center, IL 61262
9/28/83

Dear Aunt Dadie:

I am so glad you enjoyed the photographs. Believe me, it was my pleasure to send them to you. In fact, I have the negatives and would be happy to make copies for anyone wanting them. The corrections to the inscriptions on the back of some of the pictures that you made were really appreciated. This is the best way I know to keep history accurate. Let me try to answer a few of your questions in turn.

Bill Motley was born William Collins Motley son of Thomas Stir Whittle and Rebecca Collins Motley. As near as I can figure, Bill had an older brother, John Fred and a younger brother, Thomas Whittle. Shortly before my Grandpa Nicholson died, he wrote a marvelous little autobiography. I made a copy for you as I know it will give you great pleasure to read. On page 6 of his memoirs, Grandpa mentions working on "Uncle Bill's" farm. I presume this is the same "Uncle Bill" of the photo. Since Bill Motley was married three times (Hattie Hollenbeck, Emma Parrish and Ella Bice respectively) it is difficult to speculate as to which "wife" is pictured. While I am on the subject of the Motleys, my Dad (Dale) has a charming little anecdote that Grandpa Nicholson told him concerning Uncle Thomas Whittle Motley. As the story goes, Uncle Tom (a butcher by trade) was scalding hogs for a farmer. The farmer

told Uncle Tom that he could have one of the live hogs if he could carry it home - which Tom promptly did!

You were interested in how I discovered the pictures after all these years. Well, when Bertha Warner Nicholson (your sister-in-law) died, Grandpa Nicholson's housekeeper (a Mrs. Curry) discarded a great deal of what she thought was junk. Fortunately the pictures were spared. Grandpa gave them to Dad for safekeeping. Yet, I cringe to think of what treasures of history may have been destroyed by an uncaring housekeeper. The joy these photos brought you and will bring to future generations is the main reason why I want to gather all the memorabilia I can before it's lost forever.

Carol, the children and I would love to visit you before winter. With the exception of October 29, 1983 (which is my high school reunion), any Saturday or Sunday is fine with us. Let me know when it's most convenient for you and we will be there.

All our love,

Tom & Family