

ELDON'S COOK BOOK

Penned by
Eldon Hardy Cook

JAMES OLLIE COOK & WILLY HORNSBY

❖ CECIL & Edna

Peggy

Panzky Peggy & Patsy (twins)

FLOYD + LOIS

❖ HORTON (HB) & LOIS

Sandy

MARIE

❖ LOUISE & Hess Hall

Don

Glen

Jan

❖ TUCKER & Bertha Mae

Jimmy

Brenda

❖ OLLIE MAE & Toby Hannah

Andy & Shirley

Kathy *Jeff*

YATER BENTON & VASHTI MARR

* ARMITTIE & Eldon Cook (4-20-40)

YATER JUNIOR & Mildred Benton

Margaret

Marie

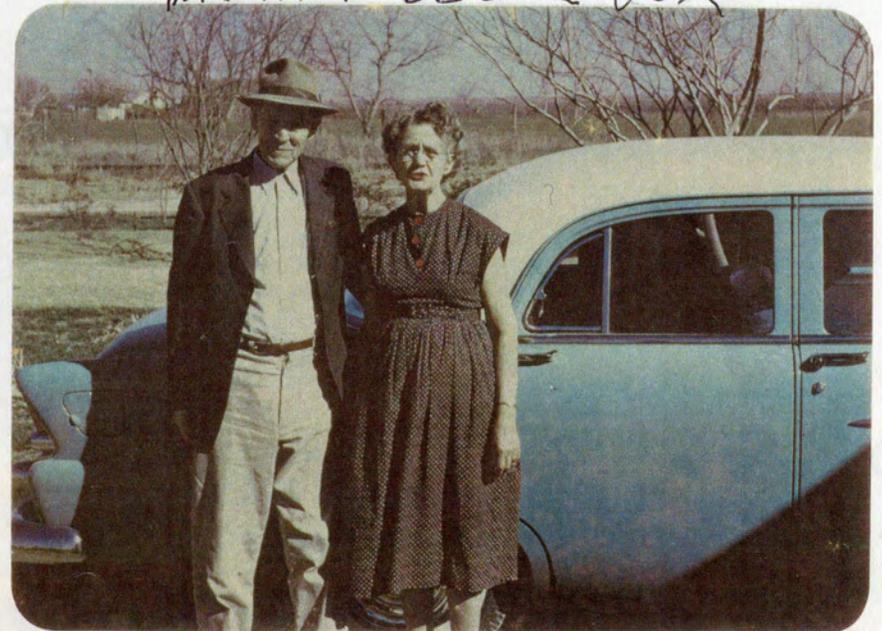
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* DORTHY & Charles Clark

Bob & Tommy Jo

Steve & Donna

Mom + Dad Cook



H.O. + Willie Cook

on credit until they finished the job. Gas cost about ten cents per gallon then. Things didn't get any better; in fact, things continued to get worse. Dad had to go to the court house in Haskell to get commodities, relief from the government. One time he brought home a sack of food on his back and he was ashamed to be seen carrying it; however, many of the neighbors had to do the same thing. We had dry cereal, but no milk. We had to use water instead. Mom made gravy with a small piece of salt pork for the grease, but we had to use water instead of milk. If you leave the grease out of this, it would be the same thing we used to glue paper on the walls....water and flour glue.

Christmas during the Depression was all about the significance of Christmas, not gifts. My brother and sisters and I did not get anything for Christmas until we were grown. My dad did the best he could at Christmas time, but that wasn't much. He would go to town in the wagon to get groceries. At Christmas time he would maybe get some apples or oranges and on a rare occasion get some candy. We were as proud of these things as if it were a bright red wagon. Gee, how things have changed.

Dad finally got a job helping build the new courthouse for Knox County. We stayed in Benjamin for several years and became active in the Baptist Church. We had many revivals but this one was

chopping weedswhatever there was to do. One day I was helping my brothers call in the cattle. I was only five years old at the time so the weeds were as tall as I was. Suddenly, I was gasping to breathe. My mother sent one of my brothers to get my dad. We got in our Chevrolet touring car and headed for the doctor. As we drove down the road, the air forced me to breathe. Then we had a flat tire and I went to gasping again. A lady coming home from the grocery store stopped to see if she could help. She saw me and told my parents, "He has asthma." She told them to get 3 drops of gasoline out of the tank and they mixed it with sugar. They had me to take it and I was able to breathe. However, we did go on to the doctor's office. This was only the beginning of many bouts with asthma. I even missed my first year of school because I had it so badly. When I got of age, I got a job in Edward's Grocery and finally wound up in the meat department helping the meat cutter. I became a meat cutter and made a living doing it in various capacities until my retirement.

The Unusual Alarm Clock in Abilene, Texas

When I was just out of High School, I went to Abilene, Texas to seek my fortune. I was only making about \$21.00 per week for about 60-65 hours of labor. I met a nice guy that was in the same boat as I was. We found a bedroom upstairs about 3 or 4 feet from the City Garage. They worked on city vehicles; buses, cars, and fire trucks. Neither of us could hear an alarm clock so we became buddies with the mechanics in the garage by helping them in various ways. We made a

The Hurricane Forest Battle

When the Germans spear-headed into the Hurricane Forest (Germany), the United States transferred 80,000 airmen to the infantry to stop them. While I was there, General Patton came up to the front lines and shook hands with each of us. He had on his pearl handled six- shooter. The reason the Germans were able to drive the Americans back was that we had a strike in the United States and the munitions were not shipped in time to stop the Germans. The American GI's sat there with very few artillery shells and less than a clip, 6 shells, of bullets in their rifle. Some say the United States Labor Unions almost let the Germans prevail because the union wanted a raise in pay. This is the major reason I never wanted to belong to a labor union when I returned to the states. We were pulled back to another area where we were going to cross the Rhine River. General Patton said he was going to cross the Rhine if it took a truck load of dog tags! We crossed the Rhine River later on a pontoon bridge put up by American soldiers, including my brother in law, Charles Clark. Later, we were fishing in the Rhine River with hand grenades. When the grenade went off, the fish would come to the top and someone would dive in to get them. This was a new way of fishing. We had a fish fry on the banks of the Rhine.

Going to the Front Lines

We were put on a truck to take us to the front lines. The drivers were driving the trucks so recklessly one had to jump off fast because they didn't like all the artillery shells up there. Our first push was to cross the Prum River to take an important German post. We crossed the river with a maximum amount of wet equipment: full length wool

Time Off for the Soldiers in Paris

Many of us tired, soldiers were finally given a trip to Paris, France. We had been on the battle front for a long time. I was given a pass to Paris with about 30 other GI's or American soldiers. I didn't know any of these guys because most of my unit had pulled back to go home. I wondered around in Paris looking for a place to relax and have a drink. Every place I would try to go into was filled to capacity with black GI's that only drove trucks behind the front lines. We had been in battle for a long time so most GI's felt like we at least should be given a little priority to get in, find a seat, and have a drink to relax. The trucks were all driven by black soldiers. I was not against the Blacks, but I just thought we had earned the right to have a little priority for a change. While waiting and waiting to be served, I got into a conversation with an infantry captain. I also learned that these Blacks were there about all the time. This just added to the reason we felt we should have clout since we had just come off the *front lines*. All these guys had to do was sit around all day. As we continued to wait, I found a hand grenade in my pocket. We thought how funny it would be to take the explosive out of the grenade and just pitch it out in the middle of the floor. We did this very carefully and got a little out of sight. When the ideal time came, we pulled the pin out of the grenade and tossed it on the floor. What happened next was alarming ..we suddenly had the place to ourselves! Later, I found out I had missed my ride back to camp so I flagged down one of our fuel trucks and rode it back to camp. I was not criticizing the Blacks. In fact, I would like to have changed jobs with one of them.

Why I Didn't Get a Purple Heart

When we first got into Germany, we were moving up to engage the enemy. Little did we know that they were waiting for us on top of a railroad that went around a mountain. We crossed the Prune River with all our new equipment we brought from the United States. My boots were full of water. My wool uniform was soaking wet along with my full length overcoat. There was deep snow everywhere too. When we crossed the river, we fought our way up the mountain – crossing neck-deep trenches all the way. The Germans let us go through on up to the top. We all were soaking wet and had no dry clothes. We could hear the Germans just across the river. We had to go down the hill to the river to keep an eye on the enemy. We could hear them and tried to watch them in almost total darkness. Our watch was four hours then someone would come to relieve us. My feet were hurting so that I couldn't go up the hill. I chose to stay down there and rub my feet all night.

I had to go to the infirmary because my feet were frozen. The government officials did not blame the cold weather or crossing a river in the winter. They called it "trench foot" which meant you laced your shoe laces too tight and cut off the blood circulation. Therefore, I could not receive a Purple Heart. Later, a doctor said that my rubbing my feet is what actually saved them. One doctor wanted to amputate my left foot, but I told him I could get that done later. At this time, I could still walk on it some.

We really took a beating on that hill. The Germans shut off our food supply and water. There was a group of brave soldiers called, Red Raiders, who tried to come to our rescue. Unfortunately, they crossed a mine field before they reached us. They were moaning and crying while they were dying. They desperately needed someone to