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# The Prices and The Moores

James Valentine Price and Pattie Moore Price  
of Rockingham County, North Carolina:  
Their Antecedents and Their Children

By

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## CHAPTER II

### *Alabama Interlude: The Wolfs*

THE oft-repeated tale of life and love and little children is better approached by way of the flutterings of a maiden's heart than the tissue of a young man's dreams. Not for nothing are most true stories told from the woman's point of view. That being the case, we shall examine what small glimpse is permitted us of the girlhood of Grandma\* Mildred (Minnie) Woolf, who was married to Thomas Price. The presence of Grandma Minnie will hover over many pages of this narrative, and it is as well to prepare the stage for her entrance early. For nobody could say she was a colorless woman. The impressions she made on others were varied, but they were always distinct. That courtly gentleman, Numa Reid, now Postmaster of Wentworth, recalls her as "a breath of the Old South." To her rebellious grandson, Enoch, she was "the stern daughter of the voice of God"—strict, domineering, and loud. Cousin Sallie Wilson remembers her as tenderly as a mother; at the age of 87, her verdict is, "To know her was to love her."

Obviously Grandma Minnie was a woman of strong character. We shall approach her cautiously, viewing her personality from many angles. We shall study her at rest, which will not be easy, because she was not a restful woman; and we shall observe her in motion, which will be easier, because her impact on her surroundings was seldom too gentle to be measured. Only then can we think of evaluating this remarkable lady,

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\*Titles like "Grandma" and "Great-Grandfather," when prefixed informally to names, are used from the point of view of the generation of the ten Price children.

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and perhaps then we shall not presume to do so.

The tides of migration which swept into North Carolina will not serve us in the case of Grandma Minnie. She followed no man's formula, and the path over which her lively footsteps carried her into the Piedmont was quite her own. Mapping the itinerary of Minnie Woolf's ancestral line takes us over a circuitous course — from South Carolina to Kentucky, down the Father of Waters to Mississippi, and then backtracking through the cotton country of lower Alabama. It is there in the year 1860 that a certain Thomas Price, having journeyed far . . . but this takes us ahead of our story.

For the tale of Grandma Minnie really begins with *her* great-grandmother, LETITIA BIRDING,\* the earliest ancestor in this chronicle about whom there is any substantial body of anecdotage. That her story, and indeed much of the material in this chapter can be told, is due to the existence of a letter written by a first cousin of Grandma Minnie — the late Zoroaster S. Cook of Kimbrough, Wilcox County, Alabama — on January 24, 1891. A copy of this letter was sent to Mildred Price by the late Mrs. Houston Cleveland, Minnie Woolf's niece, on September 17, 1930. Other data in this chapter, particularly dates and references to collateral lines, have been constructed from entries in the "Thomas Price Bible"\*\*\* and from notes apparently in the handwriting of Minnie Woolf's sister Fannie, the late Mrs. Frances Thompson.\*\*\*

Letitia Birding was born November 28, 1761, presumably in England. As a girl she emigrated with her father's family to the British Colony of South Carolina. Life was not easy in those days. The Indians were hostile, and during the Revolutionary War their outbreaks became more serious. When Letitia was about 17 — so the tradition goes — the situation required all the families of the surrounding country to be concentrated in a fort for protection. After a time the country became quiet, but vigilance was still maintained.

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\*The first reference to a direct ancestor of the ten Price children is printed in capital letters.

\*\*Recently turned over by his daughter, Mrs. Mary Lou Price, to her nephew, Thomas Moore Price. Many of the entries are in the handwriting of Minnie Woolf.

\*\*\*In the possession of the late Mrs. Pattie Moore Price.

One day Letitia, accompanied by another girl, went to a spring on the outskirts of the fort to do some washing for the soldiers. Without warning, two Indians swooped down on them, brandishing their tomahawks with the clear intent of killing the frightened maidens. But Letitia was strong, and like her great-granddaughter-to-be, was endowed with a powerful voice. She fought off her assailant with might and main, at the same time yelling at the top of her voice. This gave the alarm. A young man at the fort — whether soldier or civilian the record does not say — heard the outcry and dashed to the rescue. The youth shot and killed Letitia's attacker, but not until the Indian had struck her a heavy blow across the head with his tomahawk. The second Indian made his escape after killing the other girl.

Letitia was carried inside the fort. When the wound was examined, her brain could be seen distinctly through the cut. For a time she lingered at the point of death, but finally her recuperative powers pulled her through.

The young man who saved her was ENOCH HOOPER. As soon as she was well, they were married at the fort.

Several years later, Enoch Hooper and his bride moved West, finally settling in Caldwell County, Kentucky, not far from the confluence of the Ohio with the Mississippi.

How many children they had is not known. We do know, however, that they had a daughter, ELIZABETH or BETSY HOOPER. Betsy was married to MATTHIAS COOK. Their children were:

1. LEVICEY COOK, born August 19, 1801; died 1843. (Also spelled LUVICEY and LUVICY)
2. Enoch Hooper Cook (married Elizabeth Selman; they were the parents of Zoroaster, to whom we are indebted for his account)
3. Olif Cook
4. Letitia Cook
5. Ellender Cook

All of these children were born in Kentucky. Subsequently their

father, Matthias Cook, went down the Mississippi with a flatboat of produce, as was the custom of the time. He sold his cargo and started home by land. But he got only as far as Rodney, in Jefferson County, Mississippi (between Natchez and Vicksburg), when he was taken sick. He died before his wife, who had been summoned from Kentucky, could reach his bedside. Once her grief was assuaged, the widow found the lower Mississippi country pleasant to behold. She sent for her family and they settled in Jefferson County. Her mother, Letitia Hooper, by this time a widow, followed her daughter and grandchildren to their new home.

In this country, Betsy Cook's eldest daughter, Levicey, and JAMES B. WOOLF spent their early married life. They were wed on January 8, 1816, according to the Zoroaster Cook account; on January 5, 1817, by Mrs. Frances Thompson's notes. In any case, she could little more than have passed her fifteenth year. The Cook version says they met and wed in Jefferson County. Mrs. Thompson speaks of them as "both natives of Kentucky, born near the town of Bowling Green. They came south to Fort Gibson, Miss." It is likely that she refers to Port Gibson, seat of Claiborne, the county north of Jefferson.

James B. Woolf was born October 5, 1789. He was the son of HARRY WOLFE and ——— ASHBY. "General Ashby was our kin," writes Mrs. Cleveland. Presumably she refers to Brigadier General Turner Ashby (1828-1862), who perished in the Great Valley while commanding a cavalry brigade under Stonewall Jackson. He was the son of Col. Turner Ashby, who fought in the War of 1812, and the grandson of Captain Jack Ashby, who saw service in the Revolution.

During his lifetime, James B. Woolf apparently changed the spelling of his name from Wolfe to Woolf.

The Woolf-Cook union, as Grandmother Minnie was later to write on sheets she inserted in the family Bible, "was blessed with 12 children." After the birth of the eldest, the family moved from Mississippi to Marengo County, Alabama. Writes Zoroaster Cook:

They moved on horseback; the mother Levicey with her baby in her arms

rode one horse, the father on another, and all their worldly goods were packed on the other two horses which they led and drove. They brought one feather bed packed in this way.

In 1818 James B. Woolf was given a grant of land between Linden and Dayton in Marengo County. In this county they were joined by Levicey's mother, Betsy, who was now married to her second husband, William Selman. There were several children by this marriage. The Selmans settled near old Whitehall, Marengo County. It is interesting to note that William Selman's first wife was Brunetta Woolf, a sister of James B. Woolf.

It is at this point that we must take leave of Letitia Birding Hooper, Betsy's mother and Levicey's grandmother. She accompanied the family to Alabama. On June 28, 1827, at the age of 65, this pioneer mother who had been nearly scalped by an Indian in South Carolina and who had been in the van of America's westward migration, passed on. She is buried in a graveyard one mile west of old Whitehall. Her daughter Betsy died on June 23, 1842, and joined her there.

James B. Woolf prospered on his grant of land. In due time he became known as a plantation owner of substance and consequence. While his many slaves worked in fields of cotton, sugar cane and corn under overseers, Mr. Woolf moved his family to a fine town house in Dayton. Though he lived amid the material elegance of an ante bellum mansion, James B. Woolf seems to have owed his spiritual allegiance to the Primitive Baptist Church, most of whose communicants were folk of simple life. The sect split away from the Missionary Baptists in 1830, holding that missionary and Bible societies and theological seminaries are the unprofitable work of man, and calling for a return to fundamentals.

"I am glad I knew my grandfather," Mrs. Cleveland writes. "He was the soul of honor and integrity."

James B. Woolf and his wife, Levicey, had twelve children, of whom Minnie Woolf was the youngest. In 1843, a year after Minnie's birth, Great-Grandmother Woolf, at the age of about 42, passed on to her

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well-earned reward. James Woolf was to marry again, taking as his bride a Miss Martha Harrison. She was Minnie's stepmother, whom we shall mention again. Mr. Woolf lived until 1872, when he died in the ripeness of his eighties. Following are the children of James B. Woolf and Levicey Cook—"all Democrats and splendid men and women," according to Mrs. Cleveland.

### 1. Thomas Jefferson Woolf

Born December 30, 1817. Teacher, lawyer, judge. Married, 1st, Margaret Bond, 1837; she died shortly; no children. Married, 2nd, Lucy Ann Walthall, February 19, 1841. Nine children: Josaphine, Winfield, Florence, Brunetta, Houston, Fannie, Lucy, Henry, Julia.

Houston (Mrs. Houston Cleveland) was to write that her father "was a most noble man, and he and my mother both educated themselves. He had 200 slaves." And his younger sister Frances (Mrs. Thompson) was to give this account:

He went to Linden, the county seat, got a position as a clerk, and by his close application and fine *common sense* he soon mounted higher on the rounds of the ladder. He was elected Judge of the Probate Court of Marengo Co., a place he filled with honor—until the Yauks turned him out.

He died August 8, 1887. Of his children, Josaphine, a talented musician-by-ear, was married twice but left no children. Winfield was a Captain in the Confederate Army; 2 daughters lived in Atlanta, Ga. Florence cared for her invalid mother; later married a Mr. Jones, left several children. Brunetta died at 18 months. Houston married, 1st, to Mr. Bruce, 1 child; 2nd, to Charles Cleveland, several children; died, Miami, Fla. Fannie married a Mr. Allen, several children. Lucy, an invalid, married, left one son. Henry, a Panama City, Fla., railroadman, one daughter. Julia, Spring Hill, Ala., several children.

### 2. Winfield Woolf

Born Feb. 19, 1821. Physician. Married Elizabeth King of Linden, Ala. He served in the war as a surgeon. Six children: William, Thomas Jefferson, James, Willie, Lizzie, Leroy. Mrs. Frances Thompson lists five in this order: William, Jefferson, Willis, James, Lizzie.

Winfield Woolf died May 17, 1866. Of the children, William married Miss Annie Norwood; both died early of consumption; left one daughter; apparently

she was named Willie and was married to a Mr. Mitchell; 3 children. Jefferson, a physician, won renown in New Orleans combating yellow fever; his younger brother Willis succumbed to it. James died at about 2. Lizzie was married to a Mr. Robertson, 2 daughters; she lived to old age in New Iberia, La.

### 3. Brunetta Woolf

Born Feb. 23, 1823. Married to Jacob Wilkinson; 3 sons. Died, August 17, 1891, at the Price farm near Madison, N.C., while visiting her sister's family, and is buried in the family graveyard there.

### 4. Polly Woolf

Born Oct. 29, 1824; died Aug. 3, 1826.

### 5. Henry Ashby Woolf

Born April 24, 1826. Married Martha Frances Gholson, Nov. 14, 1849. An attorney at Linden, Ala., he was held in popular esteem and was serving in the Alabama Legislature at the close of the War between the States. Five children: Samuel, Mattie, Eula, Nettie, Carrie. His death is not recorded.

Of the children, Samuel married Fannie Pickering; 3 children. Mattie was married to a Mr. Westbrook or Westbrooke; 4 children; lived with some of them in Tennessee. Eula remained in Linden; married to William Cunningham; five children. Nettie married to William Wynn; children; lived in Birmingham, Ala. Carrie married to Thomas Turner; lived in Birmingham, Ala.

### 6. Elizabeth Woolf

Born Dec. 3, 1828; died Sept. 28, 1841.

### 7. Letitia Woolf

Born Nov. 2, 1829. Married to Thomas J. Evans of Louisiana, April 24, 1851. He died in the service of the Confederate Army. Five children: Mary, Fannie, Edward, Samuel, Thomas. She died in May 1872.

Of the children, Mary moved to Missouri. Fannie was married to a Mr. Jones of Mississippi; moved to Valley Mills, Tex.; several children. Edward married in Baton Rouge, La. Samuel and Thomas died in childhood.

### 8. James Woolf

Born Aug. 31, 1832, according to the Frances Thompson notes; Aug. 31, 1833, according to the family Bible notes. Married Sarah Ann Stewart of Mobile, Ala.,

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Dec. 5, 1855. Served four years in war. Three children: Daisy, Junius, Anna. *The rest of his life is shrouded in shadow. The family Bible notes, possibly in Grandma Minnie's handwriting, say: "He left his wife and three little children," and give his date of death as Mar. 27, 1890. The Frances Thompson notes state that he "died 1873—41 yrs." and, later on, that he "left three children," not explaining whether by death or more casual departure. The discrepancy perhaps may be explained by the assumption that, to a lady of Great-Aunt Fannie's sensibilities, any Woolf who left his children might be presumed to be dead.*

However that may be, Daisy and Anna moved from Texas to California. Daisy suffered from asthma and died of pneumonia near San Francisco. Anna, a trained nurse, was married to a Mr. Martin. Junius, an employee of a Mobile, Ala., bank, married; children.

### 9. Frances Woolf

Born Aug. 1, 1835. Married to Joseph L. Thompson, Jan. 16, 1856. It is apparently she who wrote the notes on which much of the data concerning her brothers and sisters are based. Three daughters: Fannie, Mildred, Nettie. Lived to an advanced age.

*Of the children, Fannie died in her twelfth year. Mildred, or Minnie Ella, was married to Capt. Samuel Crockett Upshaw; she died leaving 2 little girls—Joe, who died without children, and Minnie, who was married to Earl J. Pruitt and had "one child, a beautiful lovable little great-grandchild." (The quotation seems to establish Frances Thompson as author of the notes.) Nettie was married to John G. Abney, a Hillsboro, Tex., attorney; 3 children.*

### 10. Enoch Hooper Woolf

Born July 22, 1837; died September 23, 1840.

### 11. Jane Ann Woolf

Born Oct. 15, 1839; died September 25, 1852.

### 12. MILDRED WOOLF

She was born March 3, 1842. The last of twelve children, Grandma Minnie will not be the least to be heard from in this history. When a couple have twelve children, as did James and Leviccy Woolf, they have no cause for surprise if they start having grandchildren as quickly as

they stop having children. And so it was that little Minnie, though technically the aunt of her brothers' children, was really almost exactly the same age as Josaphine, the eldest daughter of her oldest brother, Thomas Jefferson. Aunt Minnie and Niece Josaphine became playmates and schoolmates. They received the education usual to the time and place for girls of wealthy families. For a time Minnie and Josaphine lived with Minnie's older sister, Brunetta, while they attended school in Camden, Alabama. Josaphine was one of those natural musicians who, without having studied music, could play a piece on the piano from hearing it once. Minnie, despite musical training and a fine piano at home, lacked this talent; but she was no slouch with a few simple numbers like "Helen's Dream Waltz," and this accomplishment was a source of life-long comfort to her.

Minnie could not remember her own mother. One of her early recollections was of her father's arrival at the mansion house with a new mother, the former Miss Martha Harrison. Little Minnie displayed a timidity not at all characteristic of her later years. Rather than face the new situation, she hid behind a trunk. They searched high and low, and only after her father had bellowed, "Mildred! Mildred!" for a while, did the frightened little girl creep out.

The stepmother was kind and generous to the youngster with the curly light hair and the questioning hazel eyes — the junior chick of the numerous brood she had suddenly acquired. Minnie never lacked for anything her childish heart desired. It was a favorite remark of her stepmother's that Minnie never need worry about what to wear, for she had so many dresses. A colored mammy cared for her as a child; later on, a slave girl was there to help her make the most of her appearance. She was as carefree as the magnolia-scented breeze — and knew as little about sewing, or cooking, or baking bread.

Life was a gay whirl. The Old South was in its heyday, the Industrial Revolution was roaring over Manchester and Massachusetts, cotton fetched a handsome profit, and the Woolfs were sitting on top of the world. Minnie had everything — except perhaps the loving heart of

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a mother with time to give her guidance. In these surroundings, the girl passed her formative years. It was not long before the charms of young womanhood began to steal over her. The servants called her Miss Minnie, or more formally, Miss Mildred. To many a young blade in town she must indeed have been the coming belle of Dayton. Miss Mildred was approaching her eighteenth birthday. Something was bound to happen soon. And something did.

But before we watch Minnie Woolf's knight come riding—in a buggy drawn by two handsome horses — we must backtrack in our tale a bit and find out how the man in the driver's seat happened to be in the world at all.

ANCESTRY OF MILDRED WOOLF

			ENOCH HOOPER m. about 1778, S.C. d. prob. in Ky.	LETITIA BIRDING b. Nov. 28, 1761 prob. in England d. June 28, 1827, Marengo Co., Ala.
HARRY WOLFE d. 1820 (?)	..... ASHBY d. 1820 (?)	MATTHIAS COOK m. in Ky. d. Rodney, Jefferson Co., Miss., before 1816	ELIZABETH HOOPER b. prob. in Ky. d. June 23, 1842, Marengo Co., Ala.	
	JAMES B. WOOLF b. October 5, 1789, nr. Bowling Green, Ky. m. 1816 or 1817, prob. in Mississippi d. 1872, Marengo Co., Ala.		LEVICEY COOK b. August 19, 1801, Kentucky d. 1843, Dayton, Ala.	
	MILDRED (MINNIE) WOOLF b. March 3, 1842, Dayton, Ala. m. June 12, 1860, Dayton, Ala. to Thomas Price d. February 6, 1925, in N. C.			